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HELLO KITTY 40 CELEBRATES YEARS

An exclusive look at how Sanrio turned a 'small gift,
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Plus:

- A Salute to SpongeBob SquarePants
- What's Hot at BLE 2014
- Special Report: Gaming





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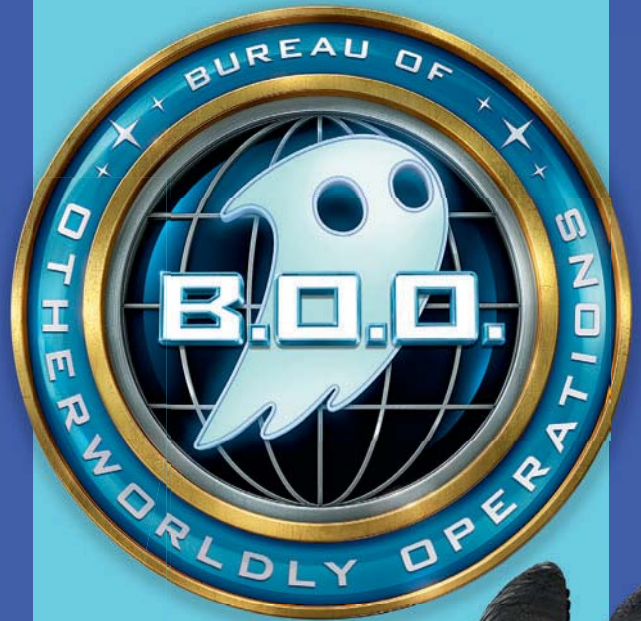
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On the Cover: Rehito "Ray" Hatoyama, chairman, and Janet Hsu, president, chief operating officer, Sanrio Inc.

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TRU President Hank Mullany

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The Attributes of a Global Brand



By **Tony Lisanti**
Editor-in-Chief

While there is a world of difference between Hello Kitty and SpongeBob SquarePants, there are also many similarities that distinguish these properties and have contributed to their longstanding growth, popularity and leadership in brand licensing.

The special Brand Licensing Europe issue, which including the Show Dailies totals 276 pages, presents not only all the top news and deals during the expo, but also exclusive anniversary tributes to Sanrio and Nickelodeon in recognition of Hello Kitty's 40th and SpongeBob's 15th anniversary, respectively.

While Hello Kitty has garnered widespread success based on the social communication philosophy and the artwork of this cute girl with the red bow created by artist Yuko Shimizu in 1974, SpongeBob has been among one of the top animated TV series, which was created by Stephen Hillenburg and debuted in 1999. In addition, while Hello Kitty has yet to enter the entertainment sector, SpongeBob is gearing up for its second movie *Sponge Out of Water* scheduled for release in February 2015.

Both properties do in fact share several strategic factors that reflect their strength and status as global brands. Consider the following:

- **Co-branding partners.** Both Sanrio and Nickelodeon are pushing the parameters on co-branding, teaming up with such brands as Major League Baseball and Vans and the U.S. Postal Service and Toyota, respectively.
- **Fashion merchandising.** Both licensors are pursuing various high-end partners while maintaining a strong mass market fashion presence as well—Hello Kitty recently partnered with Jeffrey Campbell footwear, while SpongeBob hit the runway during Fashion Week with Moschino.
- **Fan base.** Hello Kitty and SpongeBob have both built multi-generational audiences, enabling each licensor to create specific merchandise and maximize its demographics. For example, Hello Kitty

is expanding into the baby category with diaper bags from Ju-Ju-Be and strollers from Baby Trends. Nickelodeon, with one-third of its audience comprised of adult fans has been able to tailor its product assortment accordingly with an infants line from Monnalisa, various collectibles and a collab with singer Pharrell Williams.

- **Social media.** Both licensors use all platforms to communicate with fans about new products, events, etc. For example, SpongeBob boasts 58 million likes on Facebook.
- **Retail stores.** On the international front, Viacom opened Nickelodeon retail stores in Mexico this year and will expand to various countries including Saudi Arabia and Russia. Sanrio, which operates more than 400 stores internationally, recently signed a deal to create a new store prototype that will debut in Southern California in 2015.
- **Special events.** Viacom will continue to expand with Nickelodeon SpongeBob-themed shows, cruises and resorts, while Hello Kitty is launching its first fan convention this month.

In addition, other global licensors featured in this issue also share many of the attributes that have contributed to the success of Hello Kitty and SpongeBob. To remain well-informed of the new initiatives and direction of top licensors, check out the articles on Cartoon Network, DHX Brands, DreamWorks Animation, Studio 100, Universal Partnerships & Licensing, and Warner Bros. Consumer Products, to name a few. And for the latest on gaming, read the special report on page 117 to get the latest trends on the sector's continued commitment to licensing as well as diversification and new properties.

This special issue exemplifies the truly global nature of brand licensing and the scope of strategic initiatives beyond the basics as well as the perspective and insight that *License! Global* delivers daily year-round. ©

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Kohl's, AwesomenessTV Team

DreamWorks Animation's YouTube network AwesomenessTV is teaming with Kohl's Department Stores to launch S.o. R.a.d., a seven capsule, limited edition junior's fashion line inspired by the upcoming YouTube series "Life's S.o. R.a.d."

"We understand that our teen audience wants to engage with both content and influencers, that's why the S.o. R.a.d. campaign operates on so many levels," says Brian Robbins, founder and chief executive officer, AwesomenessTV. "We developed the brand first, found the perfect partner to execute in Kohl's and then created an original series that positions

Kohl's as a style destination in a cool way."

The original, four-season, scripted YouTube series will feature top teen influencers in an imaginative depiction of their involvement in the S.o. R.a.d.

brand's creation. Each of the series' seasons will feature a different pair of influencers and completely unique storylines, with the first season set to star Amanda Steele and Lia Marie Johnson.

The first S.o. R.a.d. junior's capsule launched at Kohl's Sept. 22, just days after the series' Sept. 19 debut.

"We are thrilled to partner with a cutting-edge company like AwesomenessTV and leverage the power of their new frontier of YouTube influencers to bring amazing product to our junior's shoppers," says Will Setliff, executive vice president of marketing, Kohl's. "We recognize the growing value of digital content creation and social media consumption, and are confident this new platform will create genuine, organic conversation among our teen demographic."

The first S.o. R.a.d. capsule will be priced from \$30-\$48 and will feature dresses, sweaters, skirts, knits and leggings for the junior's girl, drawing influence from urban edge, Tokyo pop and pretty princess style.

The series "Life's S.o. R.a.d." will live on the AwesomenessTV YouTube channel, which has more than 1.7 million subscribers and over 400 million views, and be promoted across the AwesomenessTV multi-channel network. The campaign will also be supported by videos from Steele and Johnson on their own YouTube channels.

"We partnered with Kohl's because we shared a vision for revolutionizing the typical approach to consumer products," says James D. Fielding, global head of consumer products and retail, AwesomenessTV. "Kohl's is also where our audience shops, making them the perfect fit for the S.o. R.a.d. brand."



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OutFit7 Celebrates 'Talking Tom' Milestone

OutFit7, creators of the app "My Talking Tom" has a lot to, well, talk about, not the least of which is the fact that its app properties just surpassed 2 billion downloads.

"This is not only a massive achievement in itself, but when you compare us to other successful app franchises, very few companies have reached even 1 billion downloads, so the fact that we've now reached 2 billion is monumental," says Angeles Blanco, senior director of licensing and merchandising at OutFit7's U.K. subsidiary.

For Blanco this milestone is a testament to the enduring strength of the company and its brands.

"As we all know digital brands can come and go," she says. "Their shelf life can be very fickle, but this shows us that we've sustained interest from fans around the world, and it's increasing year after year."

Blanco believes the key to that success has been the brands' interactivity, which keeps fans returning regularly. "My Talking Tom and Friends" currently has 230 million active users across more than 230 territories from Antarctica to North Korea.

Now Blanco is embarking on a new adventure for the budding company—an international licensing program.

"The introduction of smartphones has changed the face of entertainment, and now we're seeing a ripple effect

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on licensing," she says. "I'm working on something that maybe a couple of years ago wasn't a traditional licensing platform, but the mechanics for me remain the same. You put your key partners in place, your toy, your publishing and your apparel, and when you can you do your global deals and when can't or it doesn't make sense you do your pan-European."

And that's exactly what she's done over the last year. The My Talking Tom and Friends brand now boasts 44 licensees and 12 agents around the world.

Among some of the first product to hit retail will be daywear, nightwear, underwear and swimwear from AA Brands in Germany, Austria and Switzerland (brokered by Team! Licensing); fruit confectionery treats from Perfetti Van Melle alongside a cross-promotion with Chupa Chups and Chocoballs as well as a monthly standalone magazine from AST License in Russia (brokered by Icon Promotions); and apparel and accessories from Lotty Dotty in the U.S. and Canada (brokered by Bulldog Licensing).

"Our long-term plan is to continue to grow as we are, organically, start building on the licenses that we have and reaching out to different territories," says Blanco. "This year has been a year where we've signed many licensees. Next year will be actually seeing those products come to life and hit the marketplace and then building on the relationships with retailers and just growing, growing, growing."



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National Museum of the Royal Navy in Ship Shape for Licensing

Six years ago, the National Museum of the Royal Navy was formed from the amalgamation of a number of linked institutions. As it debuts as a BLE exhibitor this year, head of commercial services, Giles Gould, talks to *License! Global* about the steps he took to establish a licensing arm of NMRN, and what they have on offer at BLE.

"We decided three years ago to get into the licensing business, but none of us knew anything about licensing," says Gould. "The first thing we had to do was ensure that we understood the demands that would be placed upon us and that we had properly protected all our assets and could offer all the necessary support to our partners."

The assets include a massive archive of sound and images, 11 ships and 99 aircrafts. Among the submarines are the HMS Alliance, X51 and Holland 1, and major ships include HMS Victory, HMS Caroline, HMS Trincomalee and HMS M.33. The most famous of the ships is Nelson's Trafalgar flagship, HMS Victory, an asset now protected by a community trademark.

A new museum has just opened in

Portsmouth,
England.
Called Hear
My Story,

it tells the real-life stories behind the Royal Navy and contains a collection of 120 letters written over a period of years from a sailor serving in the West Indies to his sweetheart at home.

"Each letter is beautifully illustrated," says Gould. "The collection offers licensing possibilities," he adds, suggesting stationery and soft furnishings as licensing options.

Next year is the 250th anniversary of Victory's launch, and the museum will offer pieces from Victory herself. Pieces of wood and copper removed from Victory, known as "Victory Arising" for curatorial reasons, offer licensing opportunities in jewelry and also for products such as models of the Victory mounted on wood from the ship herself.

Of particular interest may be HMS Caroline, the sole survivor from the Battle of Jutland, which will open to the public on her centenary in 2016.



Microsoft Buys 'Minecraft' Studio

Microsoft has acquired Stockholm-based game developer Mojang and its iconic "Minecraft" franchise for \$2.5 billion.

The acquisition is expected to close later this year.

"Minecraft" is one of the most popular video games in history, with more than 100 million downloads, on PC alone, since its launch in 2009.



Mojang will join Microsoft Studios, and Microsoft plans to continue to make "Minecraft" available across all the

platforms on which it is available today.

"We are going to maintain 'Minecraft' and its community in the ways people love today, with a commitment to grow," says Phil Spencer, head, Xbox, Microsoft.

"Gaming is a top activity spanning devices, from PCs and consoles to tablets and mobile, with billions of hours spent each year," says Satya Nadella, chief executive officer, Microsoft. "Minecraft is more than a great game franchise—it is an open-world platform."

Vu Bui, chief operating officer of Mojang, will give a keynote address at Brand Licensing Europe's Licensing Academy.

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Sony Pictures Consumer Products Looks Forward to 2015 Releases

The strategy for Sony Pictures Consumer Products in 2015 is to expand its brand portfolio. The plan is to continue the momentum with strong performing classics, and also introduce new properties with proven success and its built-in fan base.

One of the new properties is *Pixels*, inspired by the original short film by Patrick Jean that went viral in 2010, in which Earth gets invaded by iconic '80s video game characters, including Columbia Pictures' Q*bert, that wreak havoc by turning everything they touch into pixels. Directed by Chris Columbus, *Pixels* will be in theaters summer 2015.

The studio will also present *Goosebumps*, based on the Scholastic children's book series by author R.L. Stine. The book series has sold more than 400 million books worldwide. SPCP is slating the film release for 2015.

Hotel Transylvania 2, in theaters fall 2015, is back with a fresh new take on the most familiar and beloved characters. The first *Hotel* film opened at No.1 in more than 43 territories.

Fans of the TV series "Breaking Bad" are looking forward to its prequel, "Better Call Saul." Set six years before Saul Goodman (played Bob Odenkirk) became Walter White's lawyer, he's known as Jimmy McGill, a small-time lawyer searching for his destiny, and more immediately, hustling to make ends meet. Working alongside, and often against Jimmy is "fixer" Mike Erhmantraut (Jonathan Banks), a beloved character introduced in "Breaking Bad." The series will premiere in February 2015.

"We are extremely excited about 2015. Sony Pictures has a solid and well-balanced portfolio of properties offering the right product extensions to enhance consumer engagement with the fans."



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Peppa to Promote Fitness

Entertainment One has partnered with Tumuv to create a Peppa Pig-branded physical activity program for preschoolers in the U.K.



Developed by eOne's licensing division and Tumuv, the Move with Peppa program is designed for 2- to 4-year-olds, and will launch initially in six Places for People leisure centers in January 2015, with the program expanding nationwide throughout the year.

Move with Peppa is designed to build motivation, physical confidence, coordination and balance and will include, among other activities, a Peppa Steppa exercise routine and awards scheme. Each 45-minute, weekly session will be hosted by licensed child practitioners and feature branded Peppa session cards and equipment packs.

"We are extremely pleased to be partnering with Tumuv in developing this exciting new initiative," says Hannah Mungo, head of U.K. licensing, eOne. "Move with Peppa is the perfect way to gently introduce physical exercise, made all the more fun with themed activities and a built-in awards scheme. We hope parents and kids throughout the country will soon be joining in with our Peppa Steppa routine as the scheme expands nationwide throughout 2015."

Thunderbirds Kicks Off 50th Anniversary at BLE

ITV Studios Global Entertainment will announce its first licensees in key categories at this year's BLE for the new action-adventure series "Thunderbirds Are Go," which celebrates the franchise's 50th anniversary in 2015.

"Thunderbirds Are Go" is a remake of the iconic "Thunderbirds" series, which first aired in 1965 and has lived on in popular culture ever since.

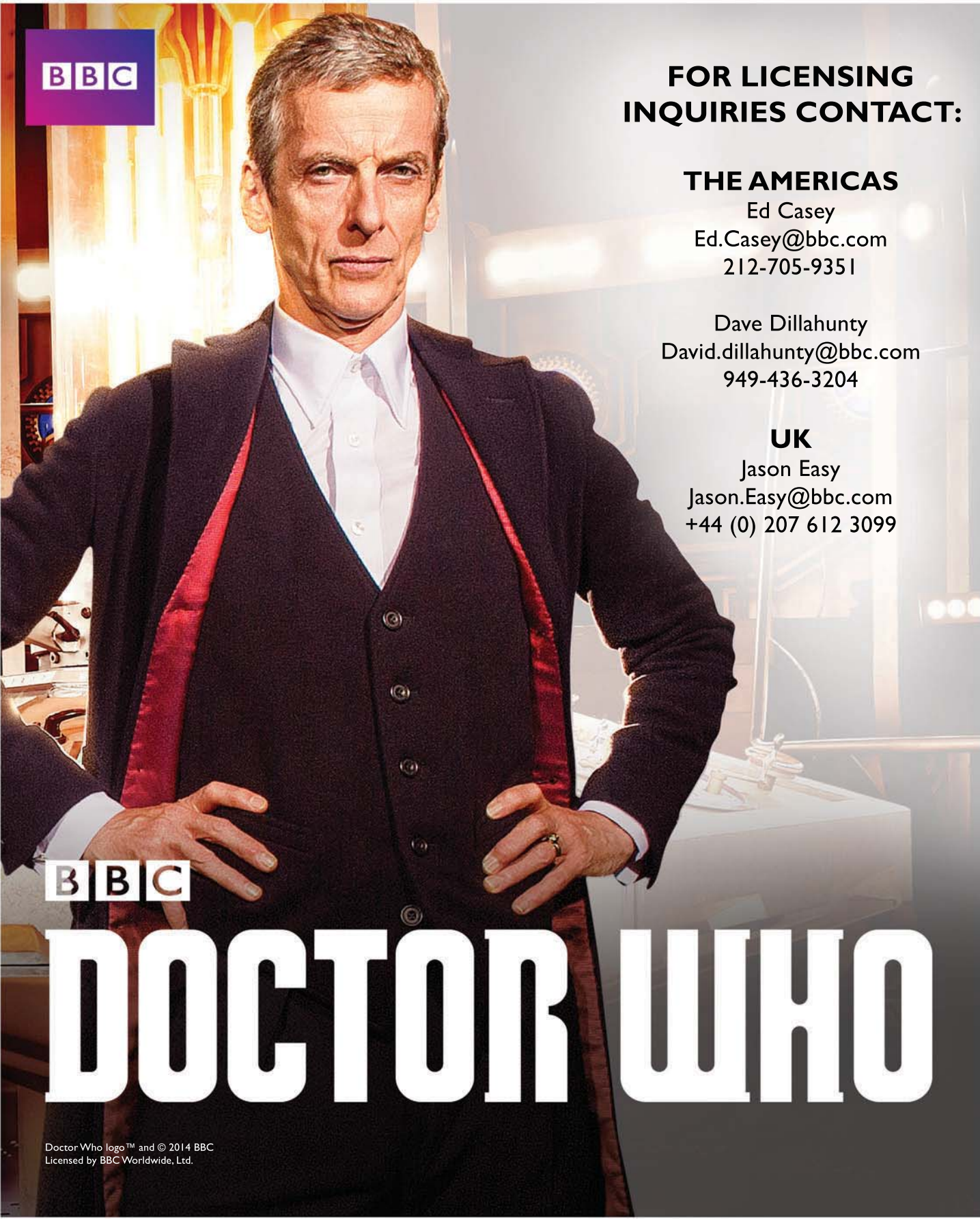
ITVS GE has signed its first-ever-licensing partners for the brand, covering key categories including toys, publishing, gifting and personal care and will announce these partners at the show. The first products are scheduled to launch at retail in fall 2015.

"Thunderbirds Are Go" will lead ITVS GE's presentation slate at BLE this year. Guests will get a look at the "Thunderbirds Are Go" digital hub, which will become central to the franchise. Attendees will also see the scale model of Thunderbird 1, which was created for the show by Pukeko Pictures and Weta Workshop, last seen at San Diego Comic Con this past summer.

The show has been confirmed as the first-ever world premiere TV screening at MIPJunior, the world's showcase for kids' programming, to be screened in Cannes, France on Oct. 11 at 6 p.m. The first season of 26 x 22-minute episodes will then debut in the U.K. in spring 2015 on ITV and CITV.

"There's nothing quite like the Thunderbirds brand, with its values of heroism, rescue and ingenuity all centered around one family and featuring some of the world's coolest vehicles and crafts," says Trudi Hayward, senior vice president, head of global merchandising, ITVS GE. "With impressive partners on board, the broadcast in place and an overwhelming response received from fans and the market to-date, we cannot wait to unveil the next stage of the international rollout of the series. We're confident that 'Thunderbirds Are Go' will be the talk of BLE."





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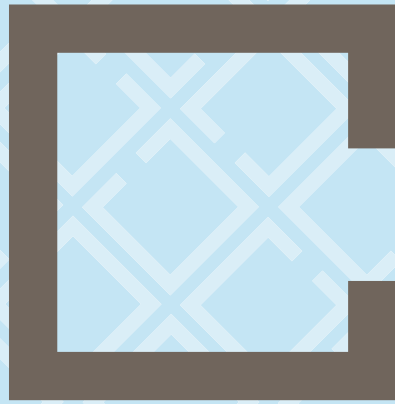


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Then and Now: Tech Trends

Looking back over the years provides insight into current technology trends for children.

By Russ Crupnick, The NPD Group



If you've ever asked yourself "Where did the time go?" a decade of NPD's Kids and Consumer Electronics reports provide an interesting retrospective into kids' relationship with technology. NPD conducted the first study in 2005, and while it seems like just yesterday, consider that the 14-year-olds reflected in that study are now finishing college or starting careers and on the road to beginning their own families.

The most popular consumer electronic devices used by kids in 2005 included portable CD players, boomboxes/stereos, film cameras and portable gaming systems. Today, the most popular devices include console video game systems, smartphones, tablets and portable gaming systems.

While the trip down memory lane is fun, and, at times, humorous, there is clearly a cycle: from learning and awareness to choice and now, immersion. The authors of the 2005 report correctly pointed out how families needed to learn more

about the new devices. By 2009 to 2010, it was about choosing devices for particular uses. Today, we see a complete immersion of children with technology in terms of devices, apps and multi-tasking.

There's no doubt that same cycle will come with future technologies, perhaps with wearables or 3D printing.

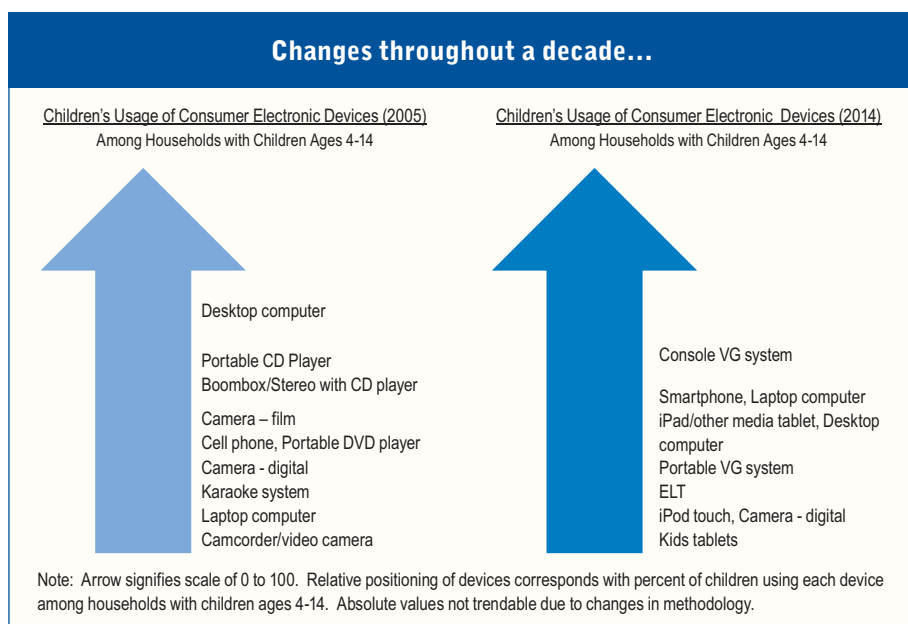
That leads to three emerging themes; four, if you count the obvious:

■ **Obvious**—Since the days when only tweens "connected," usage of devices and applications continues to get younger. There is more multi-tasking, education dominates parent's purchase motivation for the youngest kids and older kids become increasingly feature savvy (while their parents worry about cost).

■ **Innovation**—Without a next wave of device technology innovation we can expect some consolidation or slowing in the kids' consumer electronic category. With the exception of tablets and phones, many categories appear to have reached maximum penetration. Many devices are being replaced on a three-year cycle, and the functionality of the devices has, for the moment, reached a plateau.

■ **Platform**—A decade ago, kids' consumer electronics was primarily a linear experience. The CD player blasted "Kidz Bop," DVD players showed *Madagascar* and "Guitar Hero" was the new video game. The mean number of devices owned actually has dipped as multi-media and multi-function replace yesterday's linear experience and smart devices become even more capable.

■ **Participation**—In 2011, only 7 percent reported owning a tablet, and it was rare that kids were permitted to use them (only 3 percent). Equally rare was the practice of downloading child-specific content. In 2014, one-third of kids are using tablets and 84 percent are downloading child-oriented content. And we continue to see an ever-increasing intensity of participation. ©



Source: The NPD Group/Kids and Consumer Electronics 2014 and
The NPD Group/Kids and Consumer Electronics 2005



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Cartoon Network Sets Global Route



Cartoon Network Enterprises will take its upcoming show launches like “The Powerpuff Girls” to international levels in 2015.

By **Barbara Sax**

Cartoon Network is taking a global approach to its brands. After strong launches in the U.S., shows like “Adventure Time,” “Ben 10” and “Mixels” continue to have strong ratings among key demographics and have a broad distribution in 194 countries throughout the world.

Successful global licensing programs have made Cartoon Network a leader in the boys’ entertainment space worldwide, and the network also plans to raise its profile in girls’ entertainment. Now Cartoon Network is taking a new approach to its global strategy. For the first time ever, the company will launch its new programs globally from the start.

“Cartoon Network has had a lot of international success to-date with its brands, but the approach has often been to launch in one region and then expand globally and build on that success,” says Pete Yoder, vice president of consumer products, North America, Cartoon Network Enterprises. “With the upcoming ‘Powerpuff Girls’ launch, it’s a great opportunity for the network to work collaboratively across all regions to orchestrate a globally aligned series and consumer products campaign. We’re approaching the series as much more than just a television show launch, it’s a global franchise launch.”

A cohesive global approach is the future of marketing any big brand. CNE’s consumer products program will cover three core categories: toys, apparel and interactive.

“We’re talking to potential partners now and expect

to sign global toy and interactive deals in the coming months, while apparel deals will be more regionally focused,” says Joanne Broadfield, vice president of Cartoon Network Enterprises EMEA.

Launching in late 2015, “The Powerpuff Girls” will roll out in two waves. CNE will focus on the young adult market first with an apparel and accessories line that taps into the existing fan base of the original show to create buzz around the brand.

“We want to first leverage the equity that’s already there with Millennials,” says Broadfield. “We’ll be looking back at fashion collaborations from the 1990s and early 2000s.”

The program will then extend to the teen/tween and kids’ market in 2016 to bring new fans into the fold. “Product will highlight the characters and the positive empowerment messaging that’s featured in both the original series and the upcoming new series launch,” says Yoder.

“The really exciting thing about Powerpuff Girls is the brand value,” says Broadfield. “The show really resonates with girls. It’s cool, but it also has a great message that moms and dads are comfortable with.”

Cartoon Network Enterprises’s strategy for The Powerpuff Girls brand includes digital efforts, consumer products initiatives and marketing plans.

“Adventure Time,” which debuted on Cartoon Network in 2010 and is currently in its sixth season, has emerged as a strong global brand that appeals to audiences of all ages across all regions. The series



Pete Yoder, vice president consumer products, North America, CNE



Joanne Broadfield, vice president, Cartoon Network Enterprises EMEA



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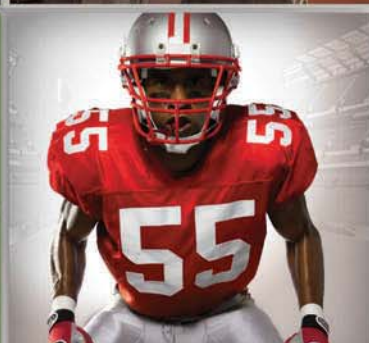
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has reached more than 132 million viewers globally to date, and is still going strong. The series was greenlit for a seventh season, and CN has a strong commitment to further build the brand and its audiences.

With more than 100 licensees globally and product in all categories and all channels of distribution, Adventure Time is a huge franchise. “We built the buzz in the U.S. and translated that to global success,” says Yoder.

This year, Cartoon Network will team up with H&M for a line of children’s Adventure Time apparel. Other key apparel licenses are in the works.

Existing global partners for the brand include USAopoly for Monopoly: Adventure Time Collector’s Edition and the upcoming Munchkin Adventure Time game; Little Orbit for an interactive “Adventure Time: The Secret of the Nameless Kingdom” game; and Funko for its popular Adventure Time vinyl toys released under its Pop! Television line.

CNE is focused on the experiential side of the brand and have placement at various location-based events so kids have many different ways of interacting with the brand. Adventure Time amusement rides and entertainment are set to open within IMG Worlds of Adventure in Dubai, the world’s largest indoor-themed entertainment destination.

Later this year, fans of the show in Thailand experienced the Adventure Zone in The Cartoon Network Amazone waterpark. Adventure Time is a key part of Cartoon Network’s 60 Days of Summer installation at Atlantis Paradise Island each year, and the Adventure Time balloon will float along the route of the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade for the second year this November.

“Ben 10,” another huge property for Cartoon Network, has been the cornerstone of the network’s

boys’ action franchises since its launch in 2006.

“It’s a brand that continues to have global success today,” says Yoder. “It’s been a top-grossing franchise for Cartoon Network, with more than \$6 billion in global retail sales to date, anchored by a total of four television series, two live-action movies, and a theatrical film currently in development.”

Globally, “Ben 10” continues to be a ratings driver for networks worldwide, drawing in more than 64 million viewers worldwide. Its consumer products program remains a top boys’ action brand across multiple categories and retailers.

“Ben 10” has consistently evolved throughout its existence. The television series and corresponding consumer products program have transitioned every few years from “Ben 10” to “Ben 10: Alien Force” to “Ben 10: Ultimate Alien” and “Ben 10: Omniverse.”

“Each series features some changes and additions to it that has allowed us to introduce new characters, new aliens, new worlds and more,” says Broadfield. “It’s still early in the planning stages, but the goal is similar to ‘The Powerpuff Girls.’ Take the great global success of ‘Ben 10’ and align all regions and partners around the same content, timeline and coordinated initiatives to maximize the opportunity.”

Earlier this year, Cartoon Network and The LEGO Group launched “Mixels,” an innovative new series of animated shorts at mixels.com as well as on the television network, a digital gaming experience and a collectible toy concept from The LEGO Group. (The brand’s “Calling All Mixels” app was the No. 1 app on iTunes at its launch and continues to perform well among fans.)

“The global partners for Mixels are the brand’s co-owners,” says Broadfield. “LEGO’s line of collectible toys based on the brand are distributed throughout the world, and Cartoon Network, in collaboration with LEGO, has created both the digital app and animated content in-house that is distributed globally as well. There’s nothing out there quite like this franchise. The products allow kids to be very creative in many ways.” As the consumer products program is developed for “Mixels,” deals are being signed on a regional basis. In the U.S., Fifth Sun (apparel), Intimo (sleepwear and underwear), Innovative Designs (stationery), Thermos (lunch kits, bottles and jars), Trends (posters, writing instruments, bookmarks) and Jay Franco (bedding) have already been signed. Additional partners will be announced soon. ©





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WHAT'S HOT AT BLE

Now in its 16th year, Brand Licensing Europe is focusing on service in the licensing community and beyond.

By **Patricia DeLuca**

Brand Licensing Europe 2014, which is taking place Oct. 7-9 in London, is gearing up to be the biggest and best event to-date, with a focus on charity and a competition to keep attendees talking long after the expo doors close.

More than 250 exhibitors occupy the BLE show floor, with 2,500 brands, characters and image brands on display.

As in past years, the BLE show floor will be divided into three designated areas: Art, Design & Image; Brands & Lifestyle; and Character & Entertainment.

The show will once again fill the Olympia event center and

take over the structure's second level, where the Art, Design & Image and the Brands & Lifestyle areas will be showcased.

This year, the Brands & Lifestyle area will extend out on the balcony of the 2nd level, allowing prime visibility for the anchor exhibitors in the area and a great view of the Characters & Entertainment stands below.

The Brands & Lifestyle area will feature four distinct sub-sectors this year—Sports, Heritage, Lifestyle and Fashion—plus a seminar series that will complement the annual Licensing Academy (the show's free program of seminars intended to educate and advance attendee's licensing

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- Roll-out on **Nick Jr** in 70+ territories begins Q4, 2014

- Free-to-air broadcasters being signed in additional key territories

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knowledge) with exclusive content just for this area of the show. The NPD Group, Planet Retail and GfK have confirmed their return as the event's official Knowledge Partners and are presenting in the Licensing Academy.

Education

In the Brands & Lifestyle section, a new feature for 2014 is the Brands & Lifestyle Theatre, where BLE will host free sessions tailored specifically to the business of licensing brands. Visitors will hear expert advice on licensing from those in the worlds of sports, lifestyle, fashion and heritage brands. As part of collaboration with Italian licensing company Brand Jam, the sessions will present powerful case studies alongside Brand Jam's interpretation of how and why they are so successful. Representatives from Beanstalk, IMG and Extreme have already been confirmed for the sessions.

The Licensing Academy will also feature two keynote sessions. Leah Davis, head of marketing, Team GB, British Olympic Association Team, will open BLE and speak on behalf of the Team GB brand. The keynote for Oct. 8 will explore the success of the hit game "Minecraft," and feature Vu Bui, chief operating officer at Mojang AB, maker of "Minecraft."

Charity

BLE is teaming with a number of charities this year including the Battersea Dogs & Cats Home, which will provide the show's first-ever mascot, rescue dog Squirt the Staffie.

In addition to Battersea, BLE and the Bounce Alzheimer's Therapy Foundation are hosting a charity event called "Table Tennis" which will raise awareness of table tennis as an effective therapy for those suffering from dementia. DC Thomson Consumer Products, The Light Fund (a licensing industry run charity that raises money for a variety of projects) and Table Tennis England will also co-sponsor the event.

License This!

Now in its fifth year, the License This! competition offers companies with fresh concepts the opportunity to break into the licensing industry.

The finale will take place Oct. 9 in front of a live audience, all leading up to an opportunity to bring the brand to market and to win a free stand at Brand Licensing Europe 2015.

The chairman for License This! is Ian Downes,

managing director, Start Licensing. Downes is joined by Paul Bufton, vice president, consumer products licensing and retail, EMEA, Rovio; Richard Haines, acquisitions and new business manager, Penguin Children's Books; and John Carolan, head of buying, children's wear, Sainsbury's.

Last year's winner, Mr. Trafalgar, has been busy developing the characters in its portfolio to bring back to this year's show. Mr. Trafalgar is in good company. Below is a scorecard of how past License This! contestants are doing post-BLE:

- 2011 winner How to... for the Inept has since signed a publishing agent contract and a deal for gifting sets.
- Turizmo, a finalist from the same year, has signed licenses for apparel, wall-coverings, game apps and stationery, some of which feature augmented reality, in the U.K. and Russia.
- 2012 finalist Lillipippins has inked licenses in the U.K., U.S., Russia/CIS, Germany and Australia.
- Last year's finalist Railway of Life secured a deal with The Coaster Company weeks after BLE 2013.

New exhibitors

Of the 250-plus exhibitors at BLE, more than 70 of them are new. Among the companies that have been added to the exhibitors list this year are Bandai Namco, Borders Design, College Brands, Coyote Ugly Saloon, Hearst Publications, King, Members Only, Team GB, The Dreamchaser Company, The Jim Henson Group, Tokidoki, UDC Licensing Agency and Yvette Jordan.

Exhibitors returning to BLE include DreamWorks Animation, British Library, Dorna Sports, Warner Bros. Consumer Products, Chupa Chups, Historic Royal Palaces Enterprises, Hasbro, Rovio Entertainment, ITV Studios Global Entertainment, Valerie Valerie, Major League Baseball, Mind Candy, Kevlar, Nickelodeon, The Royal Ballet, The National Museum of the Royal Navy and Twentieth Century Fox Consumer Products.

"We are thrilled to announce that the 16th annual Brand Licensing Europe is officially the biggest to-date," says Darren Brechin, event director, Brand Licensing Europe. "So whether you are a retailer, licensee or sales promotion professional, BLE 2014 is the perfect place for you to find partnerships and strike the deals that could transform your business forever." ©

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Tuesday, October 7

9:30–10 a.m.

Licensing Explained: A Beginner's Guide to the Business and to the Show

Kelyvn Gardner, managing director, LIMA U.K.

This is the kick-off to the Licensing Academy and BLE 2014. Attendees will get an overview on how licensing works, why licensing should be added to your marketing plans, how to buy and sell licenses, how to make licensing deals, plus the do's and don'ts of licensing.

10:30–11:15 a.m.

Rights, Royalties and Licensing Law: The Seven Deadly Sins

John Burns, partner, Gateley LLP and Christian Fortmann, managing partner, 24IP Burns and Fortmann will master-class the clauses in licensing contracts. In a unique new format, the licensing experts will take the part of licensor and licensee. They'll focus on some instances that may cause conflict between parties, and demonstrate how to avoid, tackle and overcome these at-times tricky issues.

11:45–12:30 p.m.

Licensing Facts and Licensing Figures Part I, Hits and Misses-Know Your Market

Frederique Tutt, toys global industry analyst, NPD Group, and Max Templeman, senior account manager, consumer electronics, GfK

Our two knowledge partners will look at consumer spending behavior, market trends and the hits and misses of 2014 so far. Come to find out facts, figures and gain valuable insight into long-established markets and current high-flying categories. Hear where the opportunities are for growth. NPD brings us insight into toys, film licensing and the market in the top five European territories. GfK will cover gaming, technology, home and living, office, nursery and much more.

1:00–1:45 p.m.

Keynote Address Team GB

Our keynote speaker will tell the story of the powerful and inspirational Team GB brand, to be given by Leah Davis, head of marketing at Team GB, British Olympic Association.

Wednesday, October 8

9:30–10 a.m.

Licensing Explained: A Beginner's Guide to the Business and to the Show

Kelyvn Gardner, managing director, LIMA UK

10:30–11:15 a.m.

Licensing Facts and Licensing Figures Part II: European Retail Trends and Opportunities

Denise Klug, research director, Planet Retail Klug will identify the strongest and most important retail and private label trends currently in Europe. She will also provide an overview of the top players and, as a case study, will demonstrate how European drug stores are responding to the growing need for children's ranges.

11:45–12:30 p.m.

Food and Drink: The Opportunity for Licensing

1:00–1:45 p.m.

Keynote Address Minecraft

Our keynote speaker will explore the rise of "Minecraft," one of the biggest brands on the market today. The keynote address will be given by Vu Bui, chief operating officer, Mojang, the maker of "Minecraft."

Thursday, October 9

9:30–10 a.m.

Licensing Explained: A Beginner's Guide to the Business and to the Show

Kelyvn Gardner, managing director, LIMA UK

10:30–11:15 a.m.

Real Life Stories: How & Why to Make Audits Good for Your Business

Clement Franceschini, EMEA partner, Insight Licensing

A licensing deal often starts with good intentions. But things can—and do—go wrong. Franceschini will take you through some of the most common (and unconventional) issues. You'll learn how to avoid the pitfalls and how to turn the audit process into a business-enhancing opportunity.

11:45–12:30 p.m.

Licensing Design, Art and Illustration

Sarah Lawrence, Smart Licensing with Nick Adsett, group product director, Great British Card Company; Libby Grant, Bloom; Poppy Lawton, Laura Ashley and Jo Rose, Deer Little Forest.

This panel will explain how to forge successful partnerships between artists, designers, licensees and retailers. You will gather top tips from experts in this field, learn the do's and don'ts of using an agent, and Jo Rose will present a case study of her growing brand, Deer Little Forest.

1:00 – 1:45 p.m.

License This! 2014: The Final

Chairman: Ian Downes, managing director, Start Licensing Panel: Paul Bufton, VP, consumer products licensing and retail EMEA, Rovio Entertainment; Richard Haines, acquisitions & new business manager, Penguin Children's, Penguin Random House; John Carolan, head of buying, childrenswear, Sainsbury's

License This!, BLE's licensing challenge, celebrates its fifth year in 2014. At the final, our four short-listed properties will pitch to a panel of industry experts. The audience will hear the panel offer critiques and advice to each presenter before it selects a winner. The winner receives a fully furnished stand at BLE 2015. Last year's winner, Mr Trafalgar, is exhibiting at BLE this year.

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20th Century Fox Consumer Products	E040	Giochi Preziosi S.p.a	E100	Performance Brands Ltd	E130
24IP Law Group	G114	Glenat Editions	B065	PGS Entertainment	B060
366 Hearts	J38b	Global Merchandising Services	A020	Pink Chillies	F118
41 Entertainment	E045	Glory Innovations	G068	Pink Key Consulting	L60
4K Media	E090	Golden Goose	M25	Plain Lazy Holdings Ltd	M55
Aardman Rights	F010	Guide To The Licensing World	B098	Planet Retail	K25
adidas - A.C. Milan	P15b	Hasbro Brand Licensing & Publishing	D020	Rachael Hale	B090
adidas - Real Madrid	P15a	HCA Creation	G095	Radio Days	B010
AFiN	D003	Hearst Publications	N25	Rainbow S.r.l	E020
AGMA Ry Association	R16	Hearts Designs	J55	Rapala VMC Corporation	Q15
Alchemy Licensing	R38	Heat Holders	K20	Redan Alchemy	G098
Allsorts Licensing	C095	Helen Exley London	J16	Rocket licensing	G005
American Freshman Introduces College	N16	Helz Cuppleditch	J20	Rootyoot Editions	J1C
American Greetings Properties	B048	Historic Royal Palaces Enterprises	M51	Route 66	P20
Animaru Ltd	J4	HoHo Entertainment	B100	Rovio Entertainment Ltd	D030
Ankama Group	G082	Hong Kong Trade Development Council	H080	Royal Mail	M50
Ann Edwards	J32	HUSTLER	L50	Royal Navy, Army & Royal Air Force	L30
Antoniya.M	J34	I.M.P.S	C050	Saban	D005
April Rose Illustrations	J28b	Imperial War Museum (IWM)	L65	Sagoo	F085
Arait Multimedia SA	C105	INK	D115,E115	Sanrio GmbH	B030
Arsenal Football Club	Q14	Insight Licensing Services	G118	Santoro	B050
Art Ask Agency	P60	International Brand Management	N15	Science Museum Group Enterprises	L15
Assaf Frank	J23	International New York Times	L10	SEGA	C030
Atlantya Entertainment	B040	IPR Licensing, EMEA Licensing		Sekiguchi-Monchhichi	G090
Aurora World Ltd	C001	Agent for DuPont Kevlar	M18	SMDEX	R25
Authicode	G112	ITV Studios Global Entertainment	D040	Sony Computer Entertainment Europe	F050
Automobili Lamborghini S.p.A	P10	Jan Bowman Illustration	J1h	Sony Pictures Consumer Products	A010
Baby Animals	H090	JAST Company	D001	Space Enterprises	A080
Backstage Licensing	C045	JCB	F060	Spain Licensing Pavilion	F020
Bandi Namco Games Inc	H040	JELC	D065	Start Licensing	F040
Bang on the Door Ltd	B078	Jillustrator	J1a	Studio 100	D010
Battersea Dogs & Cats Home	N30	Jpatton	M45	Studio Pets By Myrna	F003
BBC Worldwide	E065	Kali Stileman	J51	Studio Schiele	J29
Beanstalk	P100	Kate Knight	J37	Studiocanal	C100
Belle & Boo Ltd	J42	Kate Mawdsley	J47	Sublevel Studios	J26
Berni Parker Designs Limited	J57	Kayford Holdings Ltd	R18	Szaszi Art and Illustration	J1d
Big Tent Entertainment	C048	Kaynak Licensing Company	B141	Team GB	K30
Biplano SA	C040	Kazachock Licensing Expertise	H100	Teo Jasmin	L9
Blue-Zoo Animation Studio	B070	King	C132	TF1 Licenses	G058
Boj	F119	King Features	D100	The Association of Illustrators	J1i
Borders Design	J10	Kocca	C020	The British Library	L40
Brands with Influence	B057	Laser Art Studio Limited	J3	The Creative Rights Agency	B075
Bulldog Licensing	G001	Libby McMullin	J36	The Dreamchaser Company	B020
Bulls Licensing	D086	Licensing.biz & Toy News	A100	The Franklin Mint	Q12
Carmen Ariza Polska	B045	Licensing Management International	G050	The Jim Henson Group	A050
Caroline Mickler	A090	Licensing Today Worldwide	B115	The Licensing Company	N100
Carte Blanche Group	C080	Lilian Darmono	J1f	The Licensing Machine	H020
Celebrities Entertainment GmbH	E001	LIMA	L100	The Licensing Source Book Europe	H095
Character World Ltd	H050	Lisle International	E045	The Natural History Museum	K35
Chelsea Football Club	L25	Live Nation Merchandise	G035	The Partnership	N10
Chupa Chups	M10	LoCoco Licensing	M15	The Pokemon Company	F070
Clare Jordan	J28a	lovethislife	N40	The Rastamouse Company	A070
Clavis Publishing	C130	Ludorum Plc	E060	The Royal Ballet	M60
Coolabi	D060	LUK Internacional	H025	The Smiley Company	E120
Copyright Promotions Licensing Group Ltd	E070	m4e AG	C005	The UK Intellectual Property Office	G116
Copyrights	G040	Major League Baseball	P25	The Walt Disney Company	E000,C000
Countapoint Systems	G062	Marilyn Robertson	J2	Thomas Kinkade Company	J14a
Coyote Ugly Saloon	H045	Mary Evans Picture Library	J22	Toei Animation Europe	G030
Creative Licensing Corporation	B055	Mattel Brands Consumer Products &		Tokidoki	G092
Crypton Future Media, Inc	H030	HIT Entertainment	D050	Total Licensing	H035
DC Thomson & Co Ltd	F040	Mediatoon	G060	Trina Dalziel	J1e
Deer Little Forest	J56	Members Only	N12	Turner CN Enterprises	E050
Deliso Sophie La Girafe	G080	Metrostar	C090	Two Little Boys Ltd	J53
Dependable Solutions	F110	MGL Licensing	J14	Ty Inc.	D125
Discovery Consumer Products	M20	Mind Candy	G075	Ubisoft	D110
Dorna Sports SL	Q25	Monday 2 Friday	R35	UDC Licensing Agency	J40
Dracco	F030	Mondo TV	B080	UEFA Euro 2016	Q10
Dreamworks Animation	D080	Moomin	D085	UL VS (UK) Ltd	B053
DRi Licensing	C010	Moongazer Cards	J27	Universal Partnerships & Licensing	C070
Dynit S.r.l	H085	Mr Trafalgar	B132	V & A (Victoria & Albert Museum)	M40
Edis S.p.A	G065	Multi-Mac	Q13	Valerie Valerie Ltd	J59
Entertainment One	F005	My Mediabox	B110	Vicki Thomas Associates	J33
Euro Lizenzen	H055	National Museum of Royal Navy	N42	Viz Media Europe	G045
Evolution Europe	C110	National Portrait Gallery	M59	Von Dutch	K10
Extreme Sports Company	R100	NECA	B005	Walker Books	G010
Fashion UK & Pink Chillies	F118	Nelvana Enterprises	F080	Warner Bros Consumer Products	E030
FIFA	L20	Nickelodeon & Viacom Consumer Products	E005	WildSide	J1
Fluid World	A060	Occipinti	J45	Withit	F100
Freegun	R10	Octane5	P70	WWE	C060
FremantleMedia Kids & Family Entertainment	E080	One Target SA.	A030	WWF UK	L11
French Licensing Federation	G052	Outfit7	F065	Yellow House Art Licensing	J61
Fulanitos	F001	Paper Island	F090	Young Toys	D135
Full Colour Black	J19	Paper Rose	J12a	Yvette Jordan	J38
Fun-Invent B.V	G100	Pea & Promoplast SRL	F105	Zodiak Kids	B025
Games Workshop PLC	B085	Pedro Demetriou	J1b		



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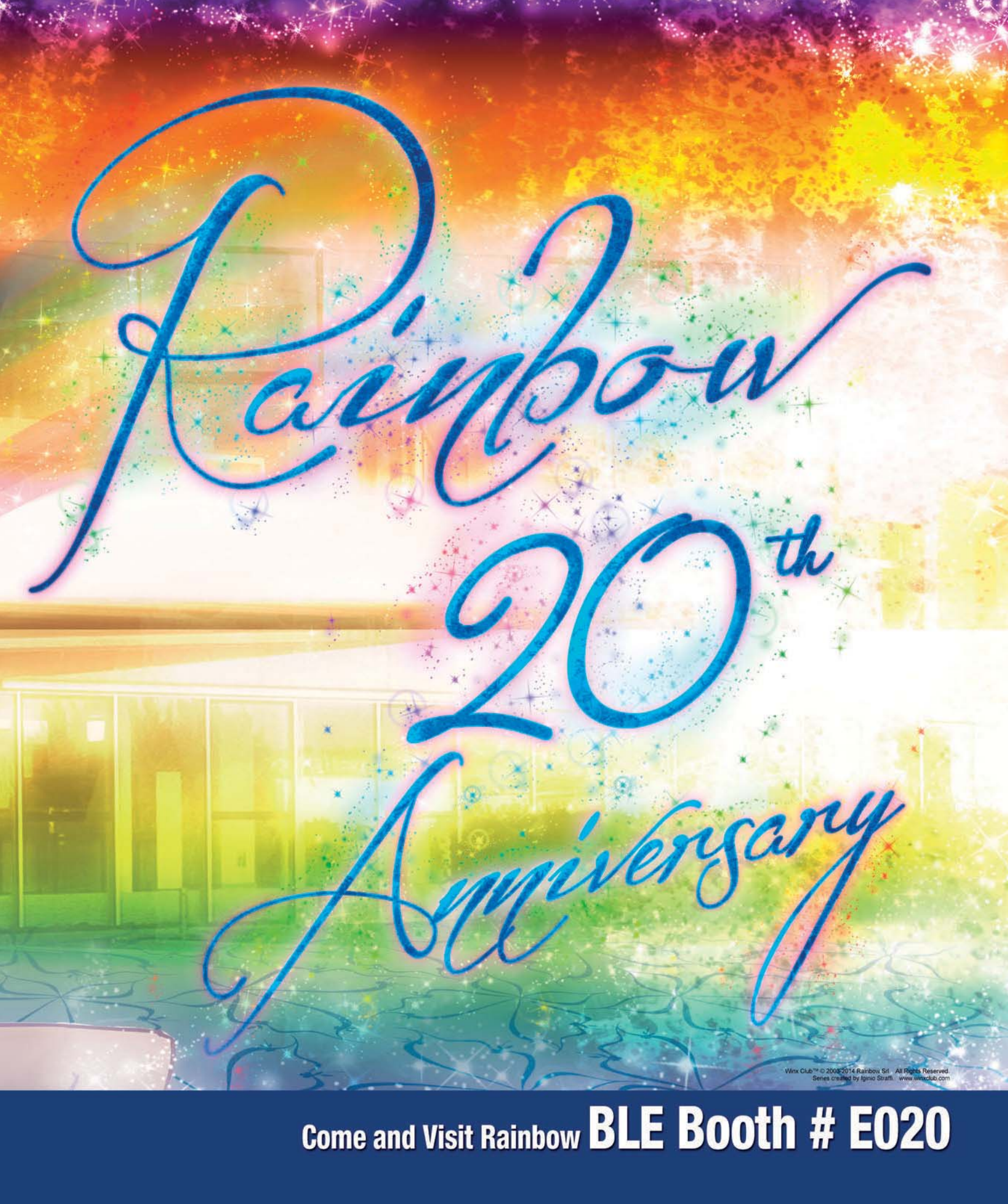


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editor's note



Sanrio Reflects Best In Brand Licensing

With more than 50,000 products, 15,000 retail stores and \$8 billion in retail sales of licensed merchandise worldwide, Sanrio has become a brand licensing juggernaut and a textbook example of licensing at its best. The fact is that only a few other brands have experienced the longevity, prosperity and respect that Hello Kitty has achieved.

As it celebrates its 40th anniversary, this exclusive 32-page section is a tribute to the accomplishments of Sanrio, the multitude of products it has introduced, the incredible fan base it has built, and, of course, the potential for future growth.

This special report features an overview and interviews with Rehito "Ray" Hatoyama, chairman, and Janet Hsu, president and chief operating officer, Sanrio Inc.

Hatoyama joined the company as a local executive in 2008 based in Los Angeles and worked closely with the late Kunihiro Tsuji. In fact, Tsuji became his mentor and much of the founder's son's philosophy has been embraced and extolled by Hatoyama as he celebrates Hello Kitty's anniversary and looks to the future, which he believes is filled with new initiatives, growth and surprises.

Hsu also joined Sanrio in 2008 as president of global consumer products and has been leading licensing ever since. She epitomizes Sanrio's culture, and has been instrumental in the development of major collaborations, innovative products and overall growth in brand licensing.

The factors that characterize Sanrio as a top global licensor include: its ability to develop characters, its comprehensive product assortment that always appears fresh and stylish, its appeal to diverse cultures and generations, the buzz it garners among celebrities and fans across social media platforms, its ability to stage live events such as art exhibits and retail promotions, the customer loyalty it has built throughout its history, the presence it has at major global retailers and a corporate culture that has remained true to its founder's original philosophy.

This special section also includes a strategic overview, a compilation of each of the original Hello Kitty artwork designs from the past 40 years, a list of all the key brand milestones and a look at the special anniversary events.

And most importantly, as Hello Kitty celebrates four decades of accomplishments, another article looks at the key initiatives that will drive future growth. Hatoyama says there will be many surprises, because after all, that's what Hello Kitty is all about.



By **Tony Lisanti**
Editor-in-Chief



Hello Kitty Celebrates 40 Years

An exclusive look at the past, present and future of this iconic brand that has become one of the world's most recognizable and beloved characters.

From a simple phrase, philosophy and art design, Sanrio has established Hello Kitty as a multi-billion dollar licensing business that has captured the hearts of consumers everywhere and become one of the most successful and popular brands in the world.

Unlike other beloved evergreen properties that have survived the test of time and still hold a special place in the hearts of consumers as well as a strong position in the marketplace, there has been no major theatrical presence for Hello Kitty, who Sanrio refers to as “a bright little girl, with a heart of gold.” There has been no television series with a library of hundreds of episodes that are still viewed by millions. There has been no major video game or collection of novels or other content to drive fan awareness and popularity over the years.

There has been only that “simple phrase” and social message, “Small Gift, Big Smile,” created by 86-year-old founder Shintaro Tsuji, when he started a Japanese silk trading company in 1960 and subsequently debuted Hello Kitty in 1974.

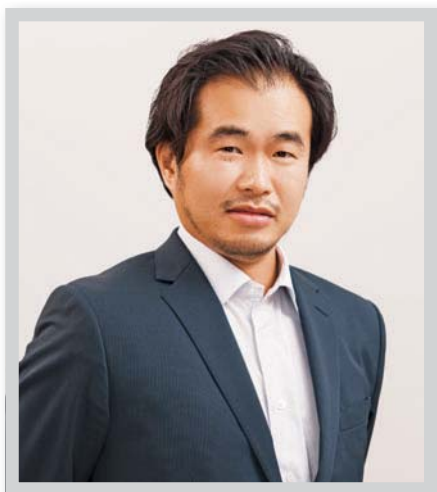
This history is part of the mystique and fascination that makes the story of this cute character even more astonishing, compelling and a true pop culture icon.

From its very first product extension—a small vinyl change purse emblazoned with the Hello Kitty original logo artwork—to airplanes, hotels and almost everything inbetween, Sanrio’s consumer products business has grown exponentially, and the company is now ranked as the sixth largest brand licensor in the world reporting \$8 billion in retail sales of licensed merchandise worldwide for 2013, according to the exclusive *License! Global* Top 150 Global Licensors annual report. Over the last five years, Sanrio has increased retail sales of licensed merchandise by \$3 billion and based on all of its initiatives the company is well positioned to continue this growth momentum.

For the fiscal year ended March 31, Sanrio reported total revenue of ¥77 million (Japanese yen), an increase of 3.7 percent, and net income of ¥12.8 million, an increase of 2.1 percent over the previous fiscal year. The Hello Kitty brand spans more than 70 countries and more than 50,000 products, which are available in 15,000 retail doors.

From a brand values standpoint, Sanrio has mastered the art of social communication. From a business perspective, Sanrio has mastered the tenets of brand licensing. The company is a classic example of how to build a lifestyle-driven consumer products business based on quality merchandise, fashion forward products, co-branding deals, live events and international expansion, while remaining nimble, efficient and focused on the core operating philosophy that its founder instilled in the culture for over five decades and still reinforces to this day.

Tsuji continues to serve as president and chief executive officer of Sanrio and remains active in the company even after the loss of his son, Kunihiko, last November. The younger Tsuji, who ran the day-to-day operations as senior executive vice president, traveled



Rehito “Ray” Hatoyama, chairman, Sanrio Inc.



Janet Hsu, president and chief operating officer, Sanrio Inc.



the world as the ambassador of the Hello Kitty brand and the executive who personified the spirit of the Sanrio philosophy.

“Kunihiko always told me to be challenged, innovative and also to take some risk as well,” says Rehito “Ray” Hatoyama, chairman, who was hired by the younger Tsuji in 2008 in Los Angeles. “He was a mentor for me as we expanded into new areas and he really pushed me.

“Tsuji was driving the new direction, and I always had someone to support me. He always reminded me to keep on moving and go forward,” Hatoyama adds.

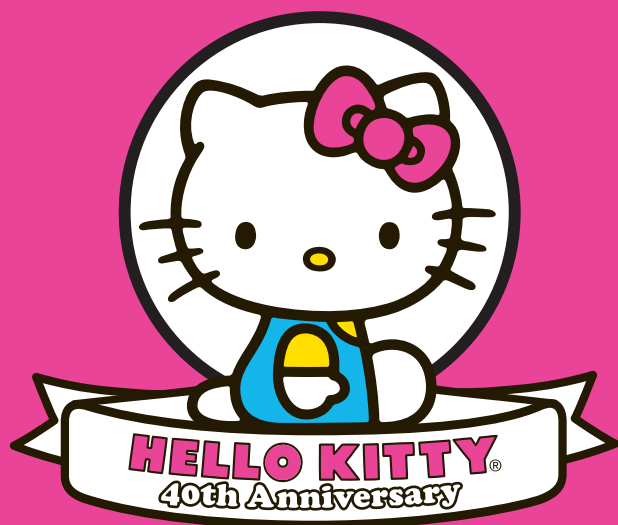
“We present happiness, friendship and the company’s mission of helping each other, represented

by ‘Small Gift, Big Smile,’ explains Hatoyama. “This is fundamentally universal and also it has appeal to everyone. So regardless of language, country or anything else, Hello Kitty translates to all people. That has been why she has been so special and growing all over the world.”

“The Hello Kitty brand has always remained authentic and grounded,” adds Janet Hsu, president and chief operating officer. “We have always developed the brand very organically, so even though she has evolved

and she has changed in many ways, it has all been done very organically.

“We don’t pay celebrities to wear our products or love our products. We don’t do traditional advertising,” says Hsu. “Everything we do is about the



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connection with the fans, so its much more organically done and that has always remained intact no matter how much we have grown. The ‘Small Gift, Big Smile’ philosophy remains prevalent throughout all of our initiatives and is tailored to specific products.”

The key factors that have contributed to Sanrio’s growth in consumer products include:

- **Traditional.** Walmart and Toys ‘R’ Us recently debuted the Hello Kitty Kitchen Café.
- **Exclusives.** Sephora recently launched a 40th anniversary line that includes eyeshadow, lip balm and accessories.
- **Co-branding deals.** This has always been a key strategy for Sanrio and the company keeps expanding it with such recent partners as Minnetonka, Major League Baseball and Vans, to name a few.
- **Fashion forward.** Designer collections ranging from the high-end with Mikimoto to Jeffrey Campbell footwear to mass market exclusives with Target address the brand’s diverse consumers.
- **Category diversification.** Sanrio has expanded into several categories including publishing, food and baby products.

The company has been able to nurture its philosophy and effectively communicate its message and engage fans in recent years through social media. According to Hsu, the Hello Kitty audience is currently more than 19 million across major social platforms.

“We get an authentic, engaged connection and listen to our fans feedback and address whatever we can,” says Hsu. “We have been able to alert our fans about a new collection or new product entry into the marketplace and we have stayed away from it being too focused on products.”

Sanrio clearly understands its multi-tiered customer base and its penchant for fashionable, distinctive and trendy products.

“The creative process is critical,” emphasizes Hsu. “We have to make sure that we have product offerings for every type of consumer we have. The brand is very relevant, and we can interpret its position when it all comes together and provide an element of surprise.

“We really define different types of creative and product offerings that fit all types of customers because of age and lifestyle. We look at everything from a generational perspective,” she adds.

“The best partnership occurs when our licensees understand the brand and have the love and connection to the brand and fans.”



The organizational structure for this global company with major offices in the U.S., Europe, Japan, South America and throughout Asia, remains local and committed to the corporate philosophy.

“We are very unified in terms of vision and objectives,” says Hsu, “and we believe in reinforcing the company’s philosophy and keeping things fun. Even with headquarters in Japan, we truly believe in localization by market because there is a tremendous amount of opportunity on a localized level.”

Another important strategic growth area for Sanrio is the experience factor that provides a different type of interaction with the brand.

“Experiences are very important for Hello Kitty, such as the designer plane with EVA airlines,” says Hsu. “It’s not only about the graphic application on the outside, but the entire inside cabin, so that every little thing represents being immersed in the Sanrio world. We will see more focus on experiences in the future because it is a very important touchpoint for fans.”

The 40th Anniversary celebration, which was unveiled a few months ago, kicks into ultra high gear this month with a multitude of events and product launches that also may offer a glimpse into what fans can expect in the future.

- **Kitty Con.** The first-ever fan convention is co-sponsored by Target Stores, which will also debut an exclusive Hello Kitty anniversary collection. It will be held in Los Angeles from Oct. 31 to Nov. 2.
- **Museum tour.** A special exhibition in conjunction with the Japanese American National Museum will debut this month and tour different cities over the next two years.
- **Food truck.** A special Hello Kitty food truck will be at Kitty Con serving specialty branded food items.
- **Reading Day.** This initiative exemplifies the

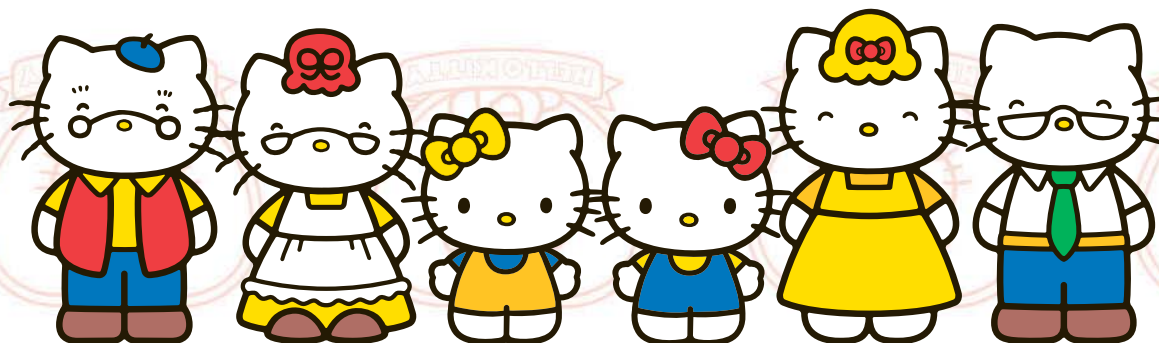
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M I L E S T O N E S

Through the years, Hello Kitty has made her mark in pop culture.



1975

Sanrio's first product, a Hello Kitty coin purse, is released to the public.



1980

The Hello Kitty digital watch makes a splash with fans and sells more than 1 million units.

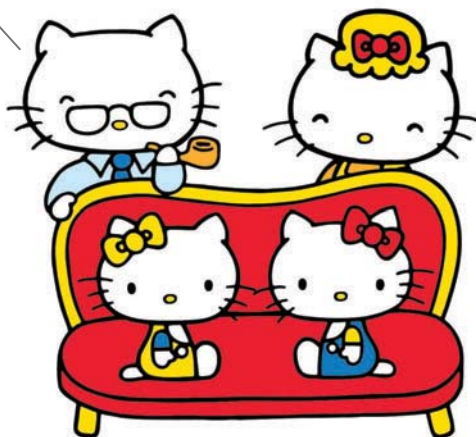


1990

Sanrio Puroland, an indoor theme park, opens in Japan.

1976

Hello Kitty's family is revealed. Twin Sister Mimmy, Papa and Mama are introduced to the Hello Kitty world.



1984

Sanrio opens its 100th store in the U.S.





2002

Celebrity friends of Hello Kitty like Mariah Carey, Mandy Moore, Christina Aguilera, Heidi Klum and Tyra Banks display their adoration of Hello Kitty to the world.



2007

Hello Kitty makes her first appearance in the annual Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.



2013

Air Hello Kitty jet makes its inaugural international flight, from Taipei to Los Angeles.

2001

Hello Kitty's first official character collaboration in the U.S. debuts with Saban Brands' Paul Frank.



2005

Sanrio launches the first high-end Hello Kitty diamond jewelry collection by Kimora Lee Simmons (as seen on Britney Spears).



2009

The Hello Kitty electric smart car debuts in the automotive market.





Four Decades of Accomplishments



1974: Hello Kitty is created.

1975: Sanrio's first Hello Kitty product, a coin purse, is launched and *The Strawberry News* magazine hits stands.

1976: Sanrio opens the first U.S. Gift Gate boutique in San Jose, Calif. Twin sister Mimmy, Papa, and Mama are introduced.

1977: The song "Ano Ko Wa Kitty" ["That Little Girl is Kitty"] is released.

1978: Sanrio begins distributing products in Europe.

1980: First Hello Kitty digital watch is introduced. Over 1 million are sold.

1981: First Hello Kitty stop-motion animation, entitled "Kitty and Mimmy's New Umbrella," and the first Hello Kitty sandwich maker are introduced.

1982: U.S. publisher Random House launches a series of Hello Kitty coloring and picture books.

1983: Hello Kitty is appointed official Junior Ambassador for UNICEF in the U.S.

1984: Sanrio opens its 100th store in the U.S.

1987: A Hello Kitty gold medal is minted.

1988: The animated cartoon series "Hello Kitty's Furry Tail Theater" is released on TV in the U.S. by CBS.

1990: Sanrio Puroland, an indoor theme park, opens in Japan.

1991: An outdoor theme park, Harmonyland, opens in Japan.

1992: Pink becomes Hello Kitty's signature color.

1993: Hello Kitty wears a flower in her hair instead of her iconic bow.

1994: The first Hello Kitty cell phone is introduced.



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1995: Sanrio.com website launches.

1997: *Hello Kitty Goods Collection* magazine launches in Japan.

1998: Daihatsu markets a Hello Kitty mini car and Yamaha, a Hello Kitty scooter. The Hello Kitty personal computer is also launched this year.

1999: Hello Kitty celebrates her 25th anniversary. Dear Daniel (Hello Kitty's boyfriend) also makes his debut.

2000: McDonald's offers its first Hello Kitty Happy Meal.

2001: Hello Kitty's first official character collaboration in the U.S. debuts with Saban Brands' Paul Frank.

2002: Hello Kitty's celebrity friends such as Mariah Carey, Christina Aguilera, Heidi Klum, Tyra Banks and Mandy Moore begin to show their genuine love of Hello Kitty to the world.

2003: Heatherette debuts Hello Kitty's designer collection on the runway.

2004: Hello Kitty is named UNICEF's Global Special Friend of Children, and the Hello Kitty MasterCard launches with Bank of America.

2005: Sanrio launches the high-end Hello Kitty diamond jewelry collection

by Kimora Lee Simmons.

2007: Hello Kitty appears in Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

2008: Hello Kitty becomes the Tourism Ambassador for Japan.

2009: Hello Kitty celebrates her 35th anniversary. The Hello Kitty electric smart car debuts.

2010: Sanrio celebrates its 50th anniversary.

2012: Hello Kitty runs for President of the United States and encourages fans to join the Friendship Party.

2013: The Air Hello Kitty jet makes its inaugural international flight from Taipei to Los Angeles.

2014: Hello Kitty celebrates her 40th Anniversary with a worldwide hug campaign.



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HELLO KITTY

ART AND STYLE

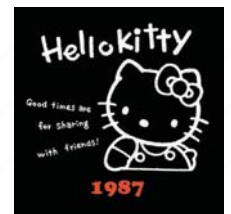
1970s



1990s



1980s



The style evolution of Hello Kitty logo art throughout the years, from 1974 to today.



2000s





■ Other events include workshops, a pop-up shop, a tattoo shop and a supermarket shop.

Sanrio's global retail strategy will continue to focus on new opportunities and exclusives as well as its own retail stores.

“It’s not about being everywhere, it’s about having enough access points for our customers,” says Hsu. “It’s not about opening new distribution channels, but taking what we have and driving innovative programs, changing and diversifying in a very meaningful way with retail partners.”

Sanrio recently signed a deal with SRA Retail to develop a new, modernized store prototype that will debut in mid-2015.

“Our stores have always been an integral part of the Sanrio experience and

an important consumer touchpoint for our brands,” says Hsu. “We are excited for SRA Retail to renovate our retail legacy, expand Sanrio’s distribution and offer fans a fresh take on the Sanrio retail experience.”

SRA Retail is a newly formed company founded by Steve Russo, chief executive officer of FABNY and Richie Adjmi, chief executive officer of Age Group, both longtime Sanrio licensees.

“Having been a licensee, and thus part of the Sanrio family, for 10-plus years, we recognize the iconic appeal that Hello Kitty and the Sanrio characters have with their millions of fans and enthusiasts,” says Russo, chief officer of SRA Retail. “Few brands have the ability to reach such a wide range of age groups as Hello Kitty, and we are thrilled to offer a new and exciting retail experience for all fans.”

As Sanrio and its fans
recognize Hello Kitty's
40th anniversary
and its many
milestones



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and accomplishments, the company is already planning for the future.

According to Hatoyama, there will be many surprises, because after all, that's what Hello Kitty is all about.

These so-called surprises, or growth initiatives, will include more collaborations and co-branding, cafés, retail stores, live events,

entertainment and new brand initiatives.

The fact is there are few limitations for new and innovative brand extensions considering the huge popularity of Hello Kitty, its multi-generational fan base and its multi-tiered retail lines.

While Hsu says that Sanrio will always remain authentic to social communication and friendship, the future will be about continuing to evolve, diversify, and stay connected with fans.

She says that Sanrio will continue to expand with experiences, events, different types of product execution, new types of collaborations and possibly even some form of entertainment might be on the horizon.

"It's all about diversification, connection and authenticity," says Hsu.

In addition to Hello Kitty, Sanrio will also focus in 2015 on some of its other properties including Mr. Men & Little Miss and two other characters celebrating anniversaries—My Melody and Little Twin Stars.

"It is important to reinforce the evergreen essence of Hello Kitty by influencing second and third generations," says Hatoyama. "There is still a lot of room to grow, many countries that we haven't entered yet and a lot of new initiatives such as digital apps and entertainment.

"Hello Kitty has always been about surprising people and we want to continue to surprise people. They are a lot of things coming," Hatoyama promises. ©



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Sanrio Supports Collab Strategy



Hello Kitty teams up with a variety of other brands and retailers to create unique products and differentiation in the marketplace.

From cool collabs that range from high-end designer fashion to sports to candy, Sanrio has demonstrated the retail clout of exclusive merchandise partnerships that appeal to multiple audiences worldwide.



This strategy, to partner with other well-known brands and retailers, will continue to be a driving force in the future growth of the Hello Kitty brand. The diverse collaborations

also exemplify the adaptability of the brand to vastly different categories and demographics.

Sanrio's original high-end Hello Kitty collaboration with Kimora Lee Simmons launched in 2005. Since then, the company has established similar partnerships including several key collaborations for Hello Kitty's 40th anniversary. They include:

- **Minnetonka**—girls' and women's moccasins and boots;
- **Chan Luu**—a unique collection of handmade bracelets, cuffs and layering

necklaces in the designer's trademark style;

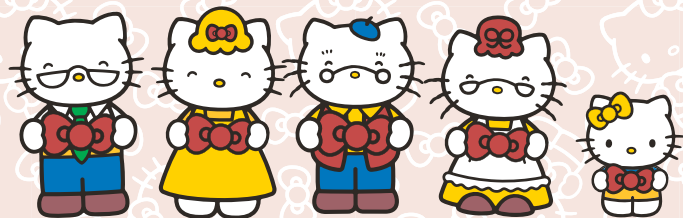
- **Major League Baseball**—an expanded collection of lifestyle products that includes all 30 MLB teams;
- **Jeffrey Campbell**—fashion forward women's footwear;
- **Sephora**—a modern capsule collection of elevated beauty collectibles;
- **Dylan's Candy Bar**—limited edition offering of candy, cookies, lollipops and sweet lifestyle products'
- **Ju Ju Be**—diaper bags, convertible bags and backpacks. ©

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Sanrio Plans First Fan Expo

In conjunction with Target, Sanrio will launch its inaugural fan convention in downtown Los Angeles, featuring all aspects of the Hello Kitty brand from artists to exclusive merchandise.

Like other iconic franchises that have successfully established live fan events, Sanrio is launching its first-ever convention to celebrate Hello Kitty's 40th anniversary and to engage its huge and connected fan base.

The official event, called Hello Kitty Con 2014, is being produced in conjunction with Target. It will take place at The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA (The Museum of Contemporary Art), in Los Angeles from Oct. 30 to Nov. 2.

"Hello Kitty Con 2014 is a testament

to Hello Kitty's remarkable ability to connect with people of all ages and backgrounds in many ways, on many levels," says Janet Hsu, president and chief operating officer, Sanrio. "It is a celebration of community and a labor of love for Sanrio, and we are thrilled to share this experience with fans."

The goal is to provide fans with the ultimate interactive experience that will include workshops, panel discussions, special guest appearances, interactive art installations and daily artist signings.

The workshops will include scrapbooking, flower arranging, nail art and DIY jewelry making. The panel discussions will feature such topics as Hello Kitty super fans, Japanese pop culture, Lolita culture, Hello Kitty as muse and more. Exclusive lectures will feature Hello Kitty head designer from Tokyo, Yuko Yamaguchi, Simone Legno, artist and creator of the tokidoki brand, and Dr. Christine Yano, co-curator of "Hello! Exploring the Supercute World of Hello Kitty."

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From a merchandising standpoint, Kitty Con 2014 will feature a Hello Kitty branded:

- Friendship Station pop-up shop offering convention exclusives and collaboration products;
- Super Supermarket, featuring a selection of vendors offering products and experiences available only at the convention. The Sanrio partners participating include Sephora, JapanLA, Loungefly, Dylan's Candy Bar, Spam Brand, Major League Baseball, Chan Luu, Perfect Square/VIZ Media and Upper Deck; and
- A vintage shop will offer rare collectibles from the past, product and collaboration previews and a tattoo shop featuring leading tattoo artists.

Target, celebrating more than 15 years of partnership with Sanrio, will co-host the VIP preview event and offer limited edition, co-branded products available only at the convention. Target will also offer an expanded collection of exclusive Hello Kitty 40th anniversary products from apparel and cosmetics to accessories and toys in stores and online.

Sanrio is also planning various interactive art installations and photo opportunities created by artists POSE and Dabs Myla and art instruction from artists Camilla d'Errico, Esther Kim, Dabs Myla and Martin Hsu.

Sanrio Tokyo's resident nail artist and *Hello Kitty Nail Art* book author Masako Kojima will provide advice on nail design. The JapanLA Art + Fashion shop

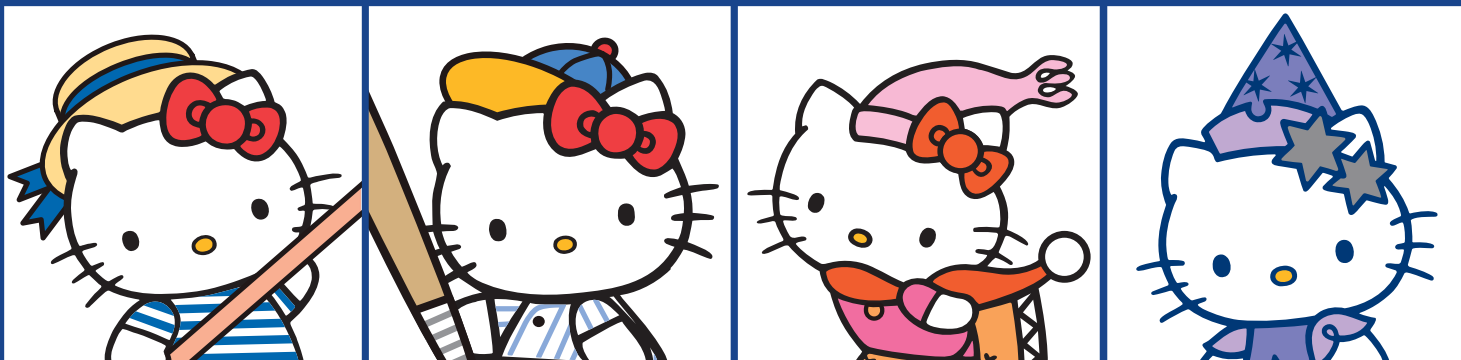


will feature art prints, figures and artist tees from favorite artists including 64 Colors, Buff Monster, Crowded Teeth, Joe Ledbetter and Miss Kika.

In addition, Sanrio will feature a fashion display curated by Stephiee Nguyen of JapanLA Clothing with one-of-a-kind creations by 13 designers including Ophelia Overdose, Abigail Greydanus, Fiori Couture and dolleyes. ©

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Sanrio Creates Museum Exhibit

This exclusive partnership will present the rich history of Hello Kitty, featuring rare and vintage items in a unique tribute to the brand's 40th anniversary.



In a deal that represents the widespread popularity of the Hello Kitty brand over the decades, Sanrio has partnered with the Japanese American National Museum for its first-ever exhibition that will launch this month in Los Angeles and travel to different cities over the next two years.

"Hello! Exploring the Supercute World of Hello Kitty" will explore the phenomenon of Hello Kitty through an extensive product retrospective and an art exhibit, as well as various workshops and panel discussions.

This initiative, similar to the event that was held in conjunction with Sanrio's 50th anniversary in 2010, also represents the

company's approach to live events that extend the brand's reach and engage fans of all ages and levels of interest.

"Since her debut on a small vinyl coin purse in Japan, Hello Kitty has become a global icon embraced by fans of all ages," says Janet Hsu, president and chief operating officer, Sanrio. "We celebrate Hello Kitty's 40th milestone anniversary with this first of its kind museum exhibition at JANM, exploring her Japanese heritage, her impact on American culture over the last 40 years and her unique ability to connect with fans on many levels. This multi-dimensional exhibition brings the essence of Hello Kitty

to life as we share her message of friendship and community with fans."

The exhibition will be co-curated by Dr. Christine Yano, author of *Pink Globalization: Hello Kitty's Trek Across the Pacific*, and Jamie Rivadeneira, founder and owner of pop culture-inspired boutique JapanLA.

To commemorate its collaboration with Sanrio and recognize Hello Kitty's 40th anniversary, JANM will produce a souvenir catalog highlighting the art and artifacts from the exhibition. The JANM museum store will also offer co-branded items such as plush, bobble heads, tote bags, t-shirts, and other collectibles. ©





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Sanrio Expands Publishing

From graphic novels to activity books, Sanrio targets fans that want a more immersive and creative role in the world of Hello Kitty.



Key partnerships and a special Hello Kitty reading day serve to underscore yet another important content-driven initiative to reach fans.

With a combination of collector's books and graphic novels, Sanrio has extended its reach with topics ranging from baking to crocheting to nail art.

The Hello Kitty Reading Day, scheduled for Oct. 25, will feature bookstore and library events across the U.S.

The licensor's key publishing partners participating in the event include Abrams, Viz/Perfect Square, Priddy Books, Penguin,

Quirk Books and Sourcebooks.

The books that will be featured include: *The Hello Kitty Baking Book*; *Hello Kitty Crochet*; *Hello Kitty: Let's Read*; *Hello Kitty Just Imagine*; *Hello Kitty Loves Mad Libs*; *Hello Kitty Nail Art*; *Happy Birthday, Hello Kitty*; *Hello Kitty: My Home*; *Hello Kitty: My Town*; and more.

Sanrio is also offering a free download of the official Hello Kitty Reading Day event kit that includes activity sheets and suggested programming.

Earlier this year, Sanrio announced a third book with Viz Media's Perfect

Square for release of a new original graphic novel entitled *Hello Kitty: Surprise!* It features seven new stories and three shorts centered on the theme of unexpected discoveries. *Hello Kitty: Surprise!* reunites the creative team of Jacob Chabot (Hello Kitty, Voltron Force), Jorge Monlongo (Hello Kitty, Mameshiba), and Ian McGinty (Uglydoll), along with special guest artist Anastassia Neislotova.

Prior to that, Viz/Perfect Square published *Hello! Kitty: Delicious*, which featured cake and candy treats. ©





Sanrio To Expand Café

With several cafés operating in South Korea and Taiwan, Sanrio is bringing the concept to Southern California.

Another key part of Sanrio's diversification strategy is the expansion of the Hello Kitty Café that will combine branded food treats and gift items in a coffee shop atmosphere.

According to the company, the concept is a modern interpretation of a European bakery and coffee shop.

For the past four decades, we have experienced the joy of going to the Sanrio store to carefully pick out that favorite stationery, accessories, plush and gifts. Now that Hello Kitty feels like a dear childhood friend, we felt it was time to expand the Sanrio experience to delight the foodie in all of us," says Janet Hsu, president, chief operating officer, Sanrio. "Our goal is to combine indulgent desserts and good eats with the world of Hello Kitty to provide an inter-generational experience for fans. Hello Kitty Café will delight the senses and make new memories for family and friends of all ages."

While Sanrio is still finalizing its café plans, the first location is planned for Southern California sometime in the second or third quarter of 2015.

According to Sanrio, the Hello Kitty Café will feature a "fast-casual setting with attention to special details and a uniquely Sanrio atmosphere." Merchandising displays of pastries, made-to-order items and interactive attractions will highlight the café.

In addition, Sanrio will unveil Hello Kitty Café Truck during the Kitty Con anniversary event that will offer a taste of what the café's menu will offer. The selection will include artisan pastries, gourmet chocolates, cakes and cupcakes, all with a Hello Kitty touch. Sanrio plans to have the food tuck



make appearances throughout Southern California over the next several months. According to Sanrio, special treats from Hello Kitty & friends will feature My Melody, Keroppi, and Chococat. ©



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Sanrio: More Smiles and Surprises

From new retail stores to food to entertainment, Hello Kitty will keep on offering gifts and smiles to its fans around the globe.

By **Tony Lisanti**

As Sanrio enters its fifth decade, the future is likely to take the company and its flagship Hello Kitty brand into new territories, new ventures and new categories that will continue to drive growth, create new partnerships and engage a multi-generational fan base.

While licensing will continue to be as important a business strategy in the foreseeable future as it has been throughout its history, there is a strong possibility that Sanrio will begin to test the waters in various new areas such as digital apps, entertainment, live events and retail. Sanrio will likely follow a similar growth strategy to other major global licensors that are seeking new and profitable ways to engage with fans year-round. Its first ever Kitty Con fan convention this month will not only provide a glimpse as to what's in the pipeline, but it also could become a regular event in the U.S. and other markets as well.

"There is still a lot of room to grow and many countries that we haven't entered yet," says chairman Ray Hatoyama. "Hello Kitty has always been surprising people, and we want to continue to surprise people. There are a lot of things coming"

Among the target areas that Sanrio will pursue include:

■ **Live events.** In honor of Hello Kitty's 40th anniversary, Sanrio partnered with the Japanese American National Museum to present a first-of-its-kind museum exhibition that opened this month in Los Angeles, Calif., and will tour for two years in cities worldwide.

■ **Retail stores.** Sanrio recently announced a new partnership with SRA Retail for the licensing rights to open and operate Sanrio retail stores in the U.S. SRA Retail, which is a new company founded by Steve Russo, chief executive officer, FABNY and Richie Adjmi, chief executive officer, Age Group, both longtime Sanrio licensees, will re-format the current retail concept and open new Sanrio store locations across the country. The new

prototype design will debut in spring 2015 with the grand opening of new Sanrio stores scheduled for fall 2015.

■ **Cafés.** The first Hello Kitty Café is schedule to open mid-2015 in southern California and offers unlimited potential for expansion.

■ **Collaborations.** Similar to its expanded relationship with Major League Baseball and such designers as jeweler Chan Luu, tokidoki and Jeffrey Campbell, Sanrio will continue to announce new co-branding deals that further expand the reach of the Hello Kitty brand.

■ **Mr. Men & Little Miss.** Since the acquisition of the property from Chorion in 2011, Sanrio has begun to relaunch the brand and will continue to develop it in 2015. Hatoyama says, "It is similar to Hello Kitty with a lot of universal messaging, and we will take it global."

■ **Other Sanrio brands.** Hatoyama also says Sanrio plans "to apply what we have done on Hello Kitty to its other characters and brands."

With a long list of new initiatives, Sanrio's future appears to be as promising as its past. One element will never change and that is the founding principle of its founder.

Says Shintaro Tsuji, president and chief executive officer, "Our business puts importance on the spiritual side of things. We make things which will help foster communication, we offer entertainment to add fun and fullness to everyday life and we seek to help friendships flourish. There has never been a time when such activities have been more needed. Indeed, 'No one is an island.'"

"That is why all of us at Sanrio shall continue, with one heart and mind, to offer the very best social communication business possible, and to help build a bridge between the hearts and minds of people all over the world. It is for this we are proud to be known, and at this, which we continue to strive to be the very best." ©

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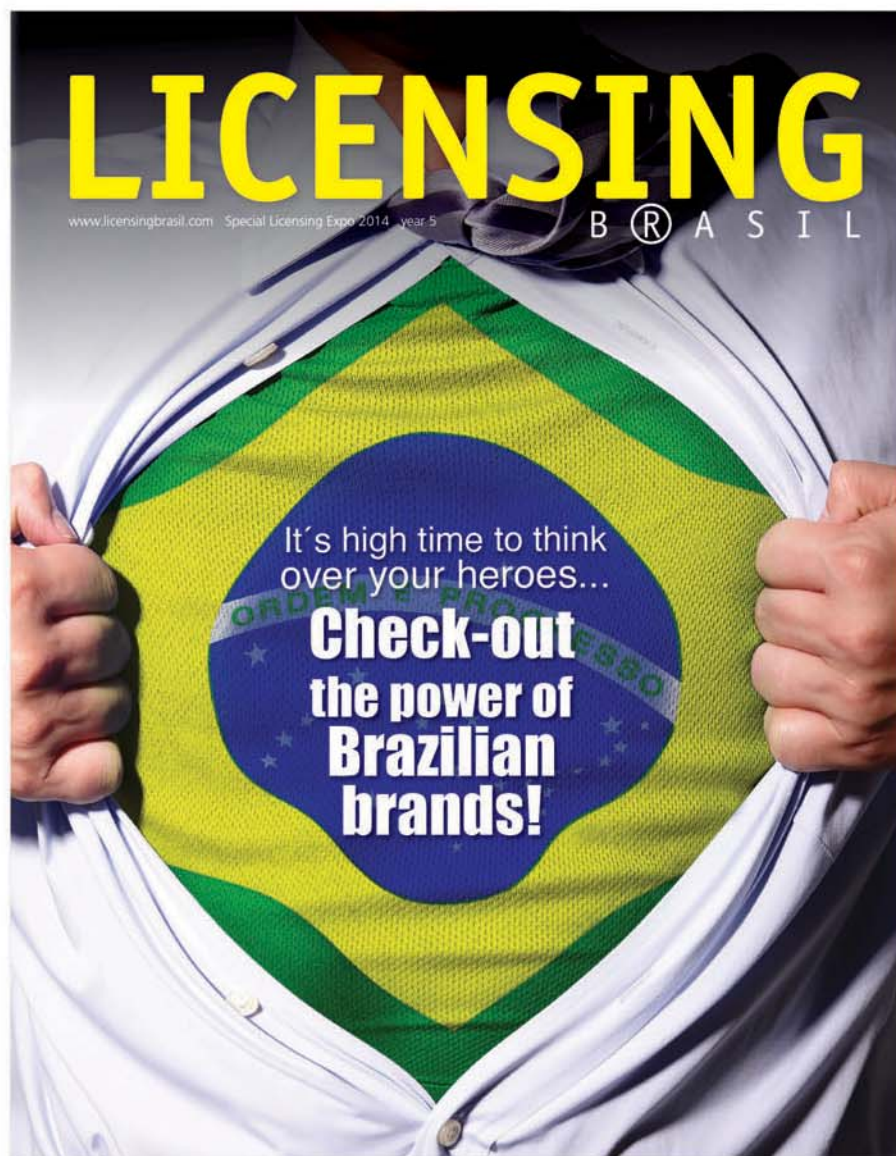
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Marie-Laure Marchand

INTERNATIONAL LICENSING DIRECTOR, STUDIO 100

100 WAYS TO SUCCEED

By **Patricia DeLuca**

Following the French premiere of *Maya the Bee: Movie* in August, Marie-Laure Marchand, international licensing director, Studio 100, is optimistic about the debut 3D movie of one of the company's top properties.

Without box office numbers or a press release in hand, Marchand based her review on her observation of the audience.

"The premiere went very well. Adults and kids were so enthusiastic. We're very pleased," she says.

Gauging customer reaction to Studio 100's brands is just part of what Marchand does. By coordinating with

the others branches of the group in Benelux and Germany, Marchand reviews development of consumer product strategies in the international market for classic brands like Maya, Vic the Viking and Heidi.

Marchand's experience is in children's licensed consumer products,

international business development, TV and marketing and she holds a degree in international business and marketing. Now she is poising *Maya the Bee* to become one of Studio 100's most international brand.

As the holiday season approaches, Studio 100 will further bolster the film

with additional *Maya the Bee: Movie* merchandising, including a book based on the movie, a new plush toy and a board game for the children's market.

Studio 100 plans to grow the *Maya* property internationally in 2015, with extensions planned for Southeast Asia, Australia and Latin America.



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Originally founded by Hans Bourlon and Gert Verhulst in 1996, Studio 100 began with just one TV production and five employees. Since, Studio 100 has acquired three theme parks (Plopsaland Parks), EM Entertainment (an independent catalog of children's content), the Australian animation studio Flying Bark, a cooking channel in Benelux and started an in-house film distribution business. Today, the company is one of the largest independent global family entertainment companies, with more than 1,000 employees worldwide and offices in Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Germany and Australia. Formerly managing director of Big Bocca TV & Licensing, a subsidiary of Upper Deck, Marchand joined Studio 100 in 2007.

Marchand and Studio 100 also have their sights set on taking another girls' character international. Heidi, based on the classic book character, will be back on TV in 2015, complete with a CGI makeover and scheduled to launch in more than 70 countries.

Deals have been sealed for Heidi publishing in Turkey and Central

Eastern Europe, and Marchand says more are on the horizon.

"We're finalizing the details at the moment," says Marchand. "It's taken a long time to negotiate, but we will have a lot of territory covered, particularly in the girls' department."

Another Studio 100 brand headed to the big screen is Australian character Blinky Bill. Produced by Flying Bark, the beloved Australian icon will be introduced to a new generation of children with a CGI animated movie, scheduled to hit theaters in June 2015. Marchand is also increasing Blinky Bill brand awareness by building the brand's licensed product range with a lineup of merchandise for the Australian/New Zealand market to follow the film premiere.

Marchand is also working on taking girl group K3 world wide. Already a top brand in Benelux for more than 12 years, and a staple in the Benelux tabloids, Marchand and Studio 100 are working on a 3D animation series based on the live band in its home base of France.

"To be able to make them travel and be more global, we decided to do this

animation series with M6 in France," says Marchand. "It will give another twist to Studio 100's lineup with an older target group with girls. It will be a very Manga, pop, girlie series."

Those attending Brand Licensing Europe this month will get a special sneak peek at the upcoming "K3" TV series launching next year.

However, some Studio 100 properties are proving to be challenging for Marchand. In Germany, "Vic The Viking," a boys' property that has popularity in Germany, but is struggling to find a home elsewhere. Marchand is working on publishing deals for the Vic property, but they're dependent on the master toy performance in G/A/S as the company and its licensees continue to watch how the property gains market share.

"We're waiting to see how it goes. We're taking our time," concurs Marchand. "We need more brand awareness for Vic."

Efforts to build brand awareness across the Studio 100 portfolio is paramount to Marchand. Plans are underway to take Studio 100 properties into the digital world full force. Currently, there are four Maya apps in more than 10 countries.

"This is a main focus of the group, for our website and apps," says Marchand.

Its newest digital venture is One a Go-Go, a gaming social platform that includes all of Studio 100's properties, which will hit Benelux first.

"If everything goes right, we'll expand in our territories," says Marchand. "Not all the brands are international, but we'll be flexible."

"We are really paying attention to this media," continues Marchand. "This is the present, but it's also the future, so we are there." ©



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Andrew Alsop

HEAD OF LICENSING, EMEA
DREAMWORKS ANIMATION

SUPER AGENT MAN

By **Tony Lisanti**

As part of its corporate global branding strategy launched last year, DreamWorks Animation is overhauling its agency model to further penetrate local markets throughout the EMEA and grow its brand licensing business.

In addition, with the strong box office performance worldwide of *How to Train Your Dragon 2* this summer along with a new and robust content slate in the pipeline, DreamWorks Animation is well positioned for international growth over the next 24 months.

“As the movie studio evolves to become a truly global family entertainment brand, it allows our consumers to touch our properties in many different ways, through live experiences, publishing and

an increasing array of consumer products, which we continue to create,” says Andrew Alsop, head of licensing, EMEA, who joined DreamWorks Animation six months ago to spearhead growth in key territories across Europe, the Middle East, Central and Eastern Europe and Africa.

“DreamWorks Animation has partnered with some of the top licensing agencies to handle the complete DWA portfolio and create a single point of contact for both licensees and retailers,” explains Alsop, a former Disney executive since 2007.

DWA’s licensing partners include:

■ Super RTL: Germany, Switzerland and Austria.

■ Planeta Junior: Spain, Italy, Greece, Turkey and Central and Eastern Europe.

■ CPLG and France Televisions Distribution: France.

■ Saban Brands: Israel.

■ CPL: Brazil and Mexico.

■ ECL: Russia.

■ CJ Entertainment and Joon: South Korea.

■ Oriental DreamWorks: China.

Separately, DreamWorks Animation invested in a direct licensing structure in the U.K. led by industry veteran Richard Hollis, who joined the company January 2014.

In addition, Alsop says that agents for the Middle East and Africa will be appointed by year-end.

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with some of the licensing agent partnerships is that they are also DWA's broadcast partners.

"We have strong broadcast partners such as Super RTL and Planeta, who also have established consumer products divisions, so it made sense that we should partner with them and put more dedicated resources against the DWA business, so we have a strong position within those markets," says Alsop.

For example, he points to the partnership with Super RTL, which formulated specific strategies for *Dragons* and created a completely integrated marketing program from prior to theatrical release through to DVD as well as for 2015 activities in anticipation of new content.

Alsop is bullish about Russia claiming that the DreamWorks brand over-indexes there. He also points to the success of the *Dragons* franchise, which he says had a strong performance at the box office this summer, becoming the fifth largest-grossing film in Russia.

According to *Box Office Mojo*, *How To Train Your Dragon 2* posted a total of \$605 million in box office revenue with \$430 million attributed to international sales.



"The passion, desire and pent-up demand for consumer products for evergreen properties such as *Dragons*, *Shrek*, *Penguins*, and *Kung Fu Panda* offer strong opportunities for growth. This is a territory in

which we are pushing on an opening door and they are ready, and wanting to develop an array of consumer products," Alsop says.

For DreamWorks Animation to achieve growth and success internationally, the studio needs to focus not only on its core franchises and theatrical releases, but on new content as well. Key properties currently in the pipeline include:

- **Theatrical:** *Penguins of Madagascar* (November); in 2015—*Home* (March), *B.O.O. Bureau of Otherworldly Operations* (June), and *Kung Fu Panda* (December); in 2016—*Trolls* (December).
- "For *Home* and *B.O.O.*, which we hope to build into franchise properties, we are in negotiations with licensees and retailers for consumer products programs to tie in with these releases," Alsop says, adding that he continues to expand *Dragons* into new categories as well as *Penguins*, which releases later this year.
- **TV:** Exclusive deals with Netflix include "DinoTrux," "King Julien," "Veggie Tales in the House" and "Puss in Boots."
- **Live events:** One of DreamWorks Animation's initiatives is the partnership with Merlin Entertainment for *Shrek's Far Far Away Adventure*, with the first attraction opening summer 2015 in London.
- **DreamWorks Classics** continues to expand *Postman Pat*, *Where's Waldo?* and *Noddy*.
- **AwesomenessTV** continues to expand its audience with new content and talent.
- **DreamWorks Press**, the studio's newly established division, will expand its print and digital books based on the studio's key franchises. The new DreamWorks licensing



structure will allow for better communication and execution, according to Alsop. "Through our agents, we can provide all of our licensees with great selling tools and the insights they need to create innovative and compelling products, which reflect the key attributes of our franchises," he says. "We are spending a lot of time explaining the DWA strategy, our licensing strategy and providing a long-term vision of the organization."

The goal is that this in turn will help to establish stronger relationships with retailers, a cross-category approach with major retailers as well as working more closely with local and specialty retailers, Alsop points out.

"We have more franchises and a much improved consumer products offering at retail," Alsop says. "We have a far more integrated approach, a stronger marketing message and more sustained activity over 365 days."

With such a strong global organizational structure in place, DreamWorks Animation is poised to expand its business to more markets, more retailers and a broader audience. International growth is a critical component to the future of the studio, and Alsop is excited to be part of the journey to help establish DreamWorks as a dominant global family entertainment brand. ©

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FOCUS ON FRANCHISES

Universal Partnership & Licensing's franchise-based business model is driving big returns for the company, both in brand loyalty and revenue.

By **Nicole Davis**

After 17 years with the company, Amy Taylor, executive vice president of Universal Partnerships & Licensing, is perhaps better placed than anyone to speak to the transformation the group has undergone.

In that time, the company has moved away from a slate-driven business to a long-term, franchise-based strategy and brought together licensing activity that was previously scattered throughout the company's different divisions into one unit.

The studio has reaped huge benefits from these changes, leading to explosive growth on both the theatrical and licensing fronts.

All of the company's licensing activity was brought together into one cohesive division in late 2008/early 2009, and just last year, that evolution reached its culmination when the NBCUniversal's TV licensing was also brought in-house.

"When I first started, licensing was a separate division focused primarily on traditional licensing,"

recalls Taylor. "Over the years we made a concerted effort to look at all the businesses within the company that were either participating in licensing or working with third parties to develop merchandise and activities around our IP—everything from traditional licensing to film promotion to home entertainment promotions and digital and interactive gaming—and we decided to take all of those like businesses and put them under one umbrella. It's been really effective for us."

That may be an understatement. In the six years since the reorg, retail sales of Universal licensed products have jumped from \$1 billion in 2009 to \$1.75 billion in 2013, according to *License! Global's* Top 150 Global Licensors report.

Much of that growth is due to the division's concerted effort to build enduring franchises rather than one-off programs centered on a piece of content.

There is perhaps no better example of this than the *Fast & Furious* property. Since the first film hit



Amy Taylor, executive vice president, Universal Partnership & Licensing



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theaters in 2001, the brand has evolved from a niche street racing film to a global action franchise. The seventh film in the series will hit theaters April 3, 2015, and there's no end in sight, both theatrically and for consumer products.

"I was working in the consumer products group before it was even titled *Fast & Furious*," say Taylor. "It was very niche, and we didn't know how big it was going to be at the box office, but you know, cars, driving, we knew there could be something there. We started by focusing on that niche set with aftermarket auto accessories, and as the film grew up our licensing program evolved as well, so now we have partnerships with Mattel and their Hot Wheels line to do die-cast replicas and Fifth Sun doing apparel."

Not only has the brand gone mainstream, but it's also become cross-generational, due in part to the length of time it's remained in the spotlight.

"Those people who went to see the movie in 2001 still go see all the movies and now they bring their kids," says Taylor. "That's really helped grow the franchise from a film perspective and from a merchandising perspective."

In addition to continuing product from partners such as Mattel and Fifth Sun, the brand also has a "whole host of construction and traditional die-cast products," according to Taylor, and is being licensed in markets around the world.

Another property that's gone from singular success to enduring favorite is the *Despicable Me* franchise, which will see its third film release with the spin-off *Minions*, on July 10, 2015. *Despicable Me 3* will follow in 2017.

"*Despicable Me* was a big milestone for us," says Taylor. "We went out to the market with an original IP, and we sold in a very big licensing program on the breakout stars, the Minions, but also on the girls and Gru, as well. Now we have more than 500 licensees

globally. After *Despicable Me 2* and leading into *Minions*, our licensing business is actually continuing to grow instead of declining, which usually happens after a film. That really speaks to the franchise nature of this property."

The licensing program has been anchored by Thinkway Toys, which took home the



Toy Industry Boy Toy of the Year award for its Talking Minions line and continues to add new collectible figures to its range every six months.

"They embraced *Despicable Me* as their own," says Taylor. "They really got involved with our filmmakers to come up with new types of technology and bring creativity and innovation to their line."

"The new lineup for *Minions* will feature more electronics, more innovation, robotics and interactive play patterns," says John Barton, senior vice president, sales and marketing, Thinkway Toys. "Our main goal is to bring the toys to life to ensure we bring the movie experience directly to consumers."

Other key licensees for the franchise include Hasbro for games and Hybrid and Jem for apparel.

The *Despicable Me* property also highlights another key focus area for Universal-family brands.

"We've had some very tremendous business growth focused around the success of our family business, with Illumination Entertainment coming on board as one of our production partners," says Taylor. "Overall we want to continue that business growth centering on *Minions* and *Despicable Me* and the continued content from Illumination."

That content will also include a new animation project, coming in February 2016. The currently untitled film is being referred to as *The Untitled Pets Project* and will feature top-tier voice talent including comedian Louis CK.

But Universal's family focus goes beyond films. With UP&L now handling NBCUniversal's TV properties, preschool network Sprout is in the picture now, as well. NBCUniversal bought out its partners in the network (PBS and HIT Television Ventures) to take full ownership of Sprout in November 2013, making a strong statement about its commitment to kids and family content.

"Whether it's family business from the film side or



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family business on the TV side, we figured the best way to manage it was to be able to look at it as a whole,” says Taylor. “Now that Sprout is owned by Comcast (NBCU’s parent company), we’re just starting to work with them to determine merchandising programs around their great content like ‘The Good Night Show’ and ‘Chica.’ We’re looking at how we can do some of the same things we’ve done on the film side.”

In another move in that direction, Universal announced in September that it had brought on Vince Klaseus to serve as president of a newly created Brand Development division. Klaseus will develop a long-term plan to expand the company’s presence in the family and kids space, including positioning Universal and creating new strategies to build and grow its portfolio of brands and consumer products. UP&L president Stephanie Sperber will continue in her current position, reporting in to Klaseus.

This latest move further cements the company’s commitment to consolidating its brand activities and growing its family business.

While it may not be for the youngest members of the clan, the upcoming new film *Jurassic World* will likely be a family affair as well, with parents who grew up with the first three films introducing their children to the franchise through the fourth.

The fact that the original film, *Jurassic Park*, is still one of Steven Spielberg’s highest-grossing films and remains Universal’s top-selling catalog DVD only heightens anticipation for the new addition.

“There are fans of the original films that are enthusiastic and can’t wait to see this new film, but it’s also a brand-new film for a whole host of new audiences,” says Taylor. “*Jurassic World* will have a broad-category program with unique programs at retail all around the world. In the ‘90s and early 2000s, when the first films came out, those were all massive programs, and this will be on that same scale.”

While most of the licensing partners have not yet been announced, the core program will include toys, apparel, accessories, consumables and publishing, among other categories.

The franchise’s original master toy partner, Hasbro, is already working on a toy line that, just like the movie, aims to bring the franchise



into the 21st century, while still paying homage to the original. And for the first time since it began working on the brand in 1993, Hasbro will introduce role play items into the mix.

“We’re keeping core elements of the brand in tact, but the 2015 line will introduce new themes and new innovation that fans haven’t yet seen from Jurassic Park toys,” says Jeff Popper, vice president, global strategy and marketing, Hasbro.

In addition to reviving successful franchises, the company is also building new ones, the most recent example of which is Pitch Perfect. Following the surprise success of the first film, a sequel, *Pitch Perfect 2*, is planned for May 15, 2015, and alongside it will be a full consumer products line that will launch the brand as a lifestyle property.

“We have seen so much enthusiasm about the return of the Barden Bellas,” says Taylor. “We’re focusing on fashion, apparel and accessories that really speak to the core audience and play off the inspiration that we see in the film. We want to give consumers the same type of feel of the girls in the film.”

Universal’s licensing business has evolved dramatically in Taylor’s time with the company, and that evolution looks to continue, not just with the growth of its family business and the strengthening of its franchises, but geographically as well.

Whether it be Jurassic Park or Despicable Me, Universal’s properties have proven themselves on a global scale, and in addition to building product programs around new content for these franchises, the company is also focused on expanding its brands internationally, from China to Latin America.

“Continuing to evolve the group and take advantage of the family business, the franchise business and growing internationally—those are the things that you will continue to see us do as we evolve and go forward,” says Taylor. ©



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EPIC RIGHTS PLAYS ON WORLD STAGE

This music merchandising agency has made a major commitment to penetrate new territories and grow its consumer products business.

By **Tony Lisanti**

With the strong popularity of its artists internationally, music merchandising and branding company Epic Rights has launched a new strategic initiative to expand its licensing business around the globe.

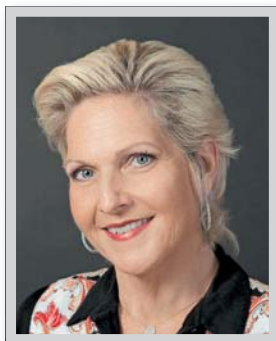
Established by veteran music executive Dell Furano, Epic Rights has quickly expanded not only its management team, but also its roster of clients, which now includes KISS, John Lennon, Aerosmith, Billy Idol, Jefferson Airplane, Woodstock, Gary Baseman, and most recently, Chicago. Now Los Angeles-based Epic Rights will take to the world stage, adopting the licensing agency strategic model to leverage the local strengths of each territory and expand its presence worldwide.

“At Epic Rights, we are changing the way music merchandise licensing has been done in the past by taking a focused hands-on approach, in a true partnership with our agents, to grow the

artist’s franchise globally with top-tier licensees and manufacturers,” says Juli Boylan-Riddles, executive vice president of global partnerships and licensing, Epic Rights. “Historically, especially in the international markets, this type of strategy has not been undertaken, and it was key for us to select the top agents in their respective territories who offer a keen understanding of our artist’s goals and provide in-depth local market knowledge, including existing, established relationships with retailers, licensees, and promotional partners.”

Epic Rights recently appointed several top international licensing agents who will focus on developing partnerships with licensees that will generate both new revenue streams and broader fan engagement, according to Boylan-Riddles. The agents are:

■ Copyright Promotions Licensing Group (CPLG) will handle Epic Rights’ clients in the U.K., Ireland,



Juli Boylan-Riddles, executive vice president, global partnerships and licensing, Epic Rights

Scotland, Wales, Germany, France, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Benelux.

- Bulls Licensing will cover Scandinavia (Sweden, Finland, Norway and Denmark).
- Plus Licens will manage Central and Eastern Europe.
- Peruvian-based Compañía Panamericana de Licencias (CPL) will represent Epic Rights throughout Latin America.
- Wild Pumpkin will handle Australia and New Zealand.

In addition, Epic Rights also plans to appoint agents for India, Japan, Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Israel later this year, says Boylan-Riddles.

“Music licensing has never gone in this direction before,” explains Boylan-Riddles. “This strategy will provide a significant opportunity for revenue growth.

“We want to change the way music licensing has been done in the past and bring it into more a traditional licensing model and be more strategic for each of our artists.”

Boylan-Riddles joined Epic Rights last May specifically to spearhead international licensing. Since Furano launched Epic Rights, he has always believed that differentiation, social media and expanding to new territories were among the critical components of his new business, and the former Live Nation executive has quickly established his company as a major force in music merchandising.

“The music merchandise business has evolved into a business that has become very competitive and very challenged from a margin standpoint,” says Furano, chief executive officer of Epic Rights. “There is very little competitive

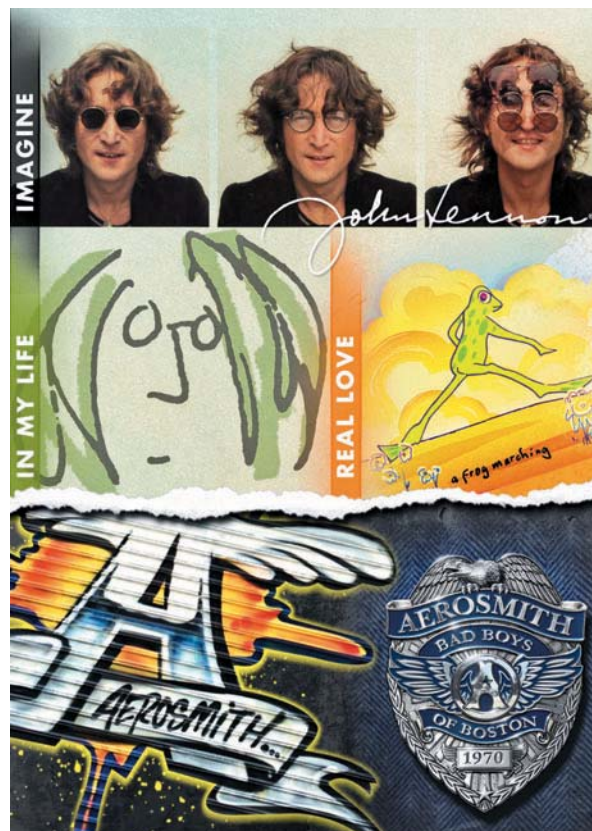
differentiation among the music agents, and Epic Rights will focus on the areas of the business that have been underserved by integrating all aspects from concerts to social media. That’s been a huge missing link in the music industry and where I see this opportunity.”

It was a major undertaking for a newly established company like Epic Rights to appoint international agents, according to Boylan-Riddles, who has spent the last five months meeting with them around the globe. “We were very selective in our approach and who we believed to be the top agents in key territories, so we are now working with them to build our roster within their territories,” says Boylan-Riddles. “We need to be a great partner to our licensees by giving them the assets that they need, the quick approvals, working with them on creative and development of their products, and being much more hands-on than our competitors.

“We consider our agents to be an arm of Epic Rights, and we will focus on the artists that have the most potential in their territories,” she adds.

Boylan-Riddles believes that having representation on a local basis provides the opportunity to have a much more cohesive and powerful merchandising program at retail and with consumers.

With the appointment of international agents, music merchandising pioneer Furano is once again setting a new operating standard for the business and a strategy he believes will drive growth for each artist as well as Epic Rights. ©





Even in a non-movie year, business is flourishing for Warner Bros. Consumer Products EMEA, and with a huge amount of new content in the pipeline, the company is gearing up for the boom to continue.

By **Nicole Davis**

With some of the most enduring franchises in the world—Batman, Superman, Looney Tunes, Tom & Jerry and Harry Potter—it's no surprise that business is good for Warner Bros. Consumer Products EMEA. What is surprising is the division's ability to continue to grow these brands even though many of them have not had major content releases in several years.

It's a testament to the power of WBCP's portfolio and the inventive execution of the company's EMEA division, helmed by Pilar Zulueta, executive vice president and general manager, WBCP EMEA.

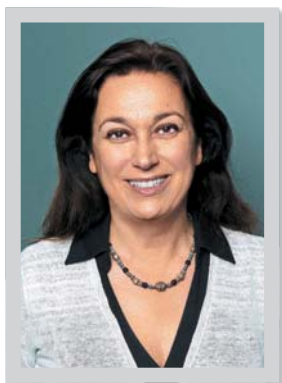
Of course, Warner Bros. doesn't plan to let its top properties lie fallow for too long. The company just announced plans for 10 upcoming DC Comics films from 2016-2020 beginning with *Batman v. Superman: Dawn of Justice* in March 2016. Add to that the finale of The Hobbit trilogy, *The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies*, out this December; a new film series from Harry Potter scribe J.K. Rowling's world of witches and wizards, *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*; and three new DC Comics-based TV series debuts this fall, and you have everything needed for major growth.

In the face of this almost overwhelming slate of upcoming new content, Zulueta is unruffled. A consummate veteran, she's been with the company for 17 years, and has led the division for 12, so for her, the influx of new material is an opportunity to take these already high-profile brands to a new level.

In the meantime, she has plenty to do, with a series of co-brandings and programs that are keeping the properties top-of-mind for retailers and consumers.

It's been more than three years since the last Harry Potter film, but thanks to an ever-growing roster of live events and attractions around the world, the brand is stronger than ever. An exhibition of film memorabilia is currently touring Europe, tours are offered daily at the Warner Bros. studio in Leavesden (where the films were shot) and the immersive theme park experience The Wizarding World of Harry Potter just opened its third location at Universal Studios Japan.

It's also been a big year for Batman, with 75th anniversary celebrations helping the franchise close out its most successful decade ever. And last year's collaboration with Sanrio for a DC Comics/Hello



Pilar Zulueta, executive vice president and general manager, WBCP EMEA

Kitty crossover was such a hit that the program will get a new iteration in 2015, this time focusing on DC Comics Super Villains. A range of top-tier licensees such as H&M, Benetton and Rubie's Costume Co. have signed on to develop collections for DC Comics Hello Kitty, who will be styled as Cat Woman, Poison Ivy and Harley Quinn, in a program that will target girls, women and collectors.

In fact, women are increasingly a focus for the DC Comics brands.

"Batman and Superman are no longer just for boys," say Zulueta. "These brands are capturing a feeling of empowerment for contemporary girls, and we are translating this global phenomenon into iconic collections that are fully embraced by our partners such as Inditex, Primark, H&M, Puma, Bioworld and many others."

Of course, there will still be plenty of superhero products for everyone. WBCP EMEA just closed a long-term deal with Puma for four co-branded collections that will feature Superman and Tom & Jerry on a range of apparel, accessories and footwear. The first collection will launch this December for the spring/summer season.

These kinds of co-brandings are a hallmark of the WBCP EMEA strategy. Another such collaboration is the Looney Tunes Active partnership with the NBA, which launched last year at BLE and which involves licensing as well as co-branded clinics and events across the EMEA. The first licensing deal is now in place with Allegre for plush toys.

Looney Tunes Active is also the subject of a host of successful food partnerships with companies such as Nestlé, McDonald's and Danone, and with retailers Système U in France and Ülker in Turkey.

For Zulueta the key to success is building long-term partnerships such as these.



"What we're about is not one specific product, but partnering with blue chip companies and retailers over the years," she says. "We are really proud to have long-term partnerships with key companies and retailers and grow with them. That's where we make the difference. Because we know each other well, we can support each other to go to the next level."

Other long-term partners include apparel group Inditex, food manufacturer Ferraro and retailer Lidl, which just completed a direct-to-retail activation for Superman that featured 1.4 million items at 10,000 stores in 26 countries.

But in a region such as the EMEA with so many varied countries and cultures, bringing brands to market successfully is not always an easy task. WBCP EMEA achieves this through a carefully concocted mixture of global and local approaches.

"There is a global brand strategy, but what we try to do in EMEA is adapt our strategy to the needs of every market," explains Zulueta. "We try to be flexible when it comes to the adaptation of the brand strategy in different markets. For instance, in the Middle East, sugar consumption as it relates to chocolate or confectionery is treated as an indulgence, while in the rest of the world, people want kids to be healthy and stay away as much as they can from sugar and confectionery. So in that category there is a different treatment depending on the region. We have to be flexible and adapt to differing tastes."

In order to do that, WBCP's EMEA division has offices in key markets (London, Madrid, Hamburg, Milan and Paris) and then works with specialist agents to cover the rest of the region including the Middle East, Turkey, Eastern Europe, the Nordics and Africa.

Some of those "agent markets," says Zulueta, are swiftly becoming the areas of highest potential.

"I'm spending most of my time now outside of what we call traditional European offices, in the Middle East especially," said Zulueta. "The high-potential markets for us now are Russia, Turkey and the Middle East."

"The future is promising," she says. "There is a lot of competition, and we're living in a complicated region, but I feel very confident on the back of all the content that we have at Warner Bros. that the future is rosy." ©





A LEADER Among Kids

DHX Brands, which was created in June 2013, offers the world's third largest portfolio of children's brands.

By **Bob Jenkins**



Peter Byrne, executive vice president, DHX Brands

Following DHX Media's acquisition of Cookie Jar (October 2012) and Ragdoll (September 2013) there was, says Peter Byrne, executive vice president, DHX Brands, "a very straightforward rationale arguing for the formation of DHX Brands. In effect, we had three separate brand management, creative and licensing teams, and there was a clear need to rationalize the teams into a single entity, consolidate our assets and ensure that we were working with a single focus across the entire portfolio."

Along with the Cookie Jar and Ragdoll acquisitions, DHX Media sealed licensing deals with a number of third parties in North America, which the company then entrusted to global licensing agency CPLG.

DHX Brands has also appointed CPLG as its agent for select properties in territories where CPLG already enjoys a well-established presence. It's a move Byrne describes as "a perfect fit with our long-term strategy of brand building and creating synergies between the brands we have created and nurtured."

DHX Brands itself operates as three separate divisions: Brand Management, Creative Services and Commercial Development, with offices in Los Angeles, Calif., Toronto, Canada, and London, U.K.

Tor Bushell, vice president, global brand management, oversees DHX Brands' global Brand Management team, based out of the London office.

"Tor has a great background in consumer products, having run global brand management

for the Thomas the Tank Engine property at HIT/Mattel,” says Byrne. “Bushell will also have particular responsibility for overseeing the Ragdoll properties and, in particular, the In the Night Garden and Teletubbies properties.”

Also in London will be Paul Keech, vice president, creative services, who will head the Creative Services division. Keech is currently recruiting his team and is, says Byrne, charged with developing the company’s creative vision and will deliver new style guides for all the company’s key properties.

In the Los Angeles office, Allie Korosi, senior brand manager, assumes brand management responsibility for the Yo Gabba Gabba! property; while in Toronto, Mandy Grimes, brand manager, will oversee all other DHX brands. Completing the new management structure is Tom Roe, commercial director, who will focus on local agents as DHX Brands rolls out its business worldwide.

It is a given that a company such as DHX, with a portfolio of properties the size and scope it has, will have to be selective and focus on the key properties that it determines have the greatest potential. And, while Teletubbies, In the Night Garden, Yo Gabba Gabba!, Inspector Gadget and Caillou are the properties that have initially been selected for particular focus, Byrne also stresses “it is important to note that we will be selecting some brands for focus in selected territories only, and some others for worldwide focus.”

Among the properties that will get global attention, Byrne notes In the Night Garden in particular, which he says, “will be getting increased brand support in the form of the re-design of a number of brand assets, including the style guide.

“In the U.K., CBeebies has just committed to the series for a further seven seasons, so here we have a great opportunity to build a campaign of real depth and create an evergreen classic,” continues Byrne.

Byrne also acknowledges the role master toy licensee Golden Bear continues to play in the development of the property.

“Golden Bear has been a real driving force, and has done a fantastic job, doubling turnover since last year.”

In the Night Garden’s British market profile is also enhanced and supported by its own attraction within CBeebies Land at Alton Towers, generating consumer product sales Byrne calls “phenomenal.”

In China, the brand has had a significant

presence for a number of years, including branded edutainment centers complete with their own curriculum. It’s a property program the company continues to invest in purposefully in the region.

“With significant support from DHX, our local agent U Young is preparing a major brand re-launch, and, to that end, is currently undertaking a major product development program with extensive new toy development,” says Byrne.

Similar programs are underway in Australia.

“DHX is committed to similar levels of investment in brand support in every market where the In the Night Garden property has a strong presence and currently enjoys airing in a suitable timeslot,” he continues.

But for all the strengths of In the Night Garden, Byrne is in no doubt that there are other properties of mention in the DHX portfolio.

“The big property in our portfolio is Teletubbies,” says Byrne. “At its peak, it racked up over \$2 billion in retail sales, it is still airing on major channels such as Cbeebies and Italy’s RAI Yo Yo and our own monitoring of the brand on YouTube shows hits of up to 50 million a month. It is no surprise that DHX Brands has made a significant investment at all levels to rejuvenate the Teletubbies brand for a modern audience, while still remaining true to the ground-breaking original—we’re looking for brand evolution not revolution.”

In addition to Teletubbies’ significant heritage, a new live-action/CGI TV series, produced by Darrell Macqueen (was recently announced). Character Options has been appointed as master toy licensee for the brand and is developing a new line of plastic, plush and bath toys.

For its other brands, DHX has plans for a major North American re-launch of Yo Gabba Gabba!, which will sit alongside Caillou’s 25th anniversary and the launch of a new CGI “Inspector Gadget” series.

“Most people would agree that this is a major roster for a company as new as DHX Brands. But it is not the end of the exciting news,” emphasizes Byrne. “We will also be announcing a new preschool show aimed at 2-to 5-year-olds, created by one of the industry’s best creative talents and full of great humor and rich and endearing characters.”

Details of the series will be unveiled at Brand Licensing Europe. ©



SpongeBob SquarePants Turns 15



Fifteen years after its TV debut on Nickelodeon, SpongeBob SquarePants remains an international pop culture icon with expanded merchandise lines and new collaborations.

By **Barbara Sax**

Nickelodeon's SpongeBob SquarePants has joined the ranks of only a handful of animated characters that have become part of the pop culture lexicon. The series "SpongeBob SquarePants" remains the No. 1 animated show with children ages 2 to 11. The character is a global icon recognized by kids and adults across a multitude of demographics. The series airs in 170 countries in 25 languages, spreading its brand of good-hearted, goofy humor to millions of fans.

One third of SpongeBob's audience is comprised of adult fans, ages 18 to 49.

"We know that adults have a giant love affair

with the show because of the way it makes them feel. The character hasn't changed much, and the stories remain simple, that's why it's so popular. SpongeBob has the same best friend, and he still works at the Krusty Krab," says Pam Kaufman, chief marketing officer and president, consumer products, Nickelodeon. "Our research shows that whether fans are age 8 or 68, the thing that keeps them coming back is the simplicity of the story. That's the brilliance of the show."

The show's success may follow a classic TV formula, but Nickelodeon continually explores new ways to reach fans on social media. The "SpongeBob

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SpongeBob SquarePants 15th Anniversary

Moves In” app lets fans move into SpongeBob’s pineapple house, get a job at the Krusty Krab and experience life in Bikini Bottom. Released more than a year ago, the app achieved a No. 1 ranking on the iTunes charts for 12 weeks.

SpongeBob also reaches fans through social media engagement. The SpongeBob SquarePants Facebook page has more than 58 million likes. Twitter provides another platform for adult fans of the show to interact with their favorite characters. SpongeBob and sidekick Patrick regularly tweet updates to their combined 1.5 million followers to keep them posted on what’s new in Bikini Bottom. Nickelodeon also used Twitter to build a storyline for SpongeBob’s “The Ice Race Cometh: A Twitter-Tale,” then completed the story in a TV episode.

The perpetually upbeat icon will star in his second feature film *The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge Out of Water*, slated for February 2015. The residents of Bikini Bottom will go on shore as they face off with a dastardly pirate (voiced by Antonio Banderas) to save their hometown. The movie offers big surprises and new formats, including a switch from 2D to 3D, a mash-up of animation and live-action, a superpower discovery and an unlikely assist from Plankton.

Nickelodeon and SpongeBob continue to push boundaries with their licensing partnerships.

Last year, Nickelodeon and the U.S. Postal Service launched SpongeBob MailPants, an educational letter writing program. Special postage paid, customized



SpongeBob postcards were available at post office locations nationwide to spark children’s interest in sending and receiving traditional mail. Mailboxes in select cities were wrapped in a custom SpongeBob design this past winter to generate interest in the program.

Nickelodeon and Toyota made a big splash with the special edition 2014 SpongeBob Highlander. The crossover SUV features a SpongeBob-themed exterior wrap and interior details, as well as an 800-gallon saltwater, tropical fish-filled tank designed by Wayne King and Brett Raymer, co-stars of Animal Planet’s “Tanked” TV show. The one-of-a-kind concept vehicle was unveiled in July during Nickelodeon’s SpongeBob Day at the Padres vs. Giants game in San Diego, Calif. The car later hit the road for a “Happy Driving!” promotional tour throughout the U.S., bringing SpongeBob’s special brand of fun to seven locations.

SpongeBob also makes the rounds in the art world. In December 2013, Nickelodeon worked with artists L’Amour Supreme and Greg Mishka on an installation at Basel Castle—a first for a children’s entertainment property—during Art Basel, an annual international art show in Miami, Fla. Supreme live painted an 8-foot, 3D, moveable SpongeBob structure



Pam Kaufman, chief marketing officer and president, consumer products, Nickelodeon



Ron Johnson, executive vice president, consumer products, Viacom International Media Networks

SpongeBob SquarePants 15th Anniversary

that was, “an incredible interactive experience for attendees,” says Kaufman.

Another item to appeal to art lovers is *The SpongeBob SquarePants Experience: A Deep Dive* by Jerry Beck. Published by Insight Editions, the coffee table book peeks into the world of Bikini Bottom for a behind-the-scenes look at the creation of SpongeBob and all the hard work and creativity that have gone into making him one of the most beloved cartoon characters to-date.

The fashion world has fully embraced SpongeBob, as well. Fashion label Moschino and its lead designer Jeremy Scott used SpongeBob as inspiration for its February runway show that featured outerwear, pants and bags, including a mink coat worth \$45,000.

“It’s a very big deal to be recognized in the world of high fashion. The coat was in *Vogue* and on the cover of *Women’s Wear Daily*,” says Kaufman. “What other property could appear on a mink coat as well as on a tube of Go-Gurt?”

The high fashion profile is part of Nick’s two-year plan to jump-start the franchise’s consumer products program.



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SpongeBob SquarePants 15th Anniversary



"Our design approach changes from year to year because the character and our style guides lend themselves to creative interpretation across a wide variety of categories and pricing tiers," says Kaufman. "At Nickelodeon, we reinvigorate our brands to keep them relevant to our audiences."

In the last year alone, SpongeBob has collaborated with underground designers Karmaloop for apparel, singer/producer Pharrell Williams and Billionaire Boys Club for t-shirts and sweatshirts (Williams himself created a limited-edition SpongeBob x BBC's Icecream fashion line, a series of five t-shirts and sweatshirts featuring four SpongeBob-inspired designs), sports company Commune for snowboard decks, singer Theophilus London and clothing label LVRS for apparel and accessories and Sprayground for its Sprayground x SpongeBob SquarePants: SpongeBob SharkPants deluxe backpack.

Nickelodeon recently signed a deal with acclaimed London-based designer Beatrix Ong MBE for a range of luxury SpongeBob SquarePants accessories, homewares and a selection of apparel set to appear at retail next spring. The designer will create a

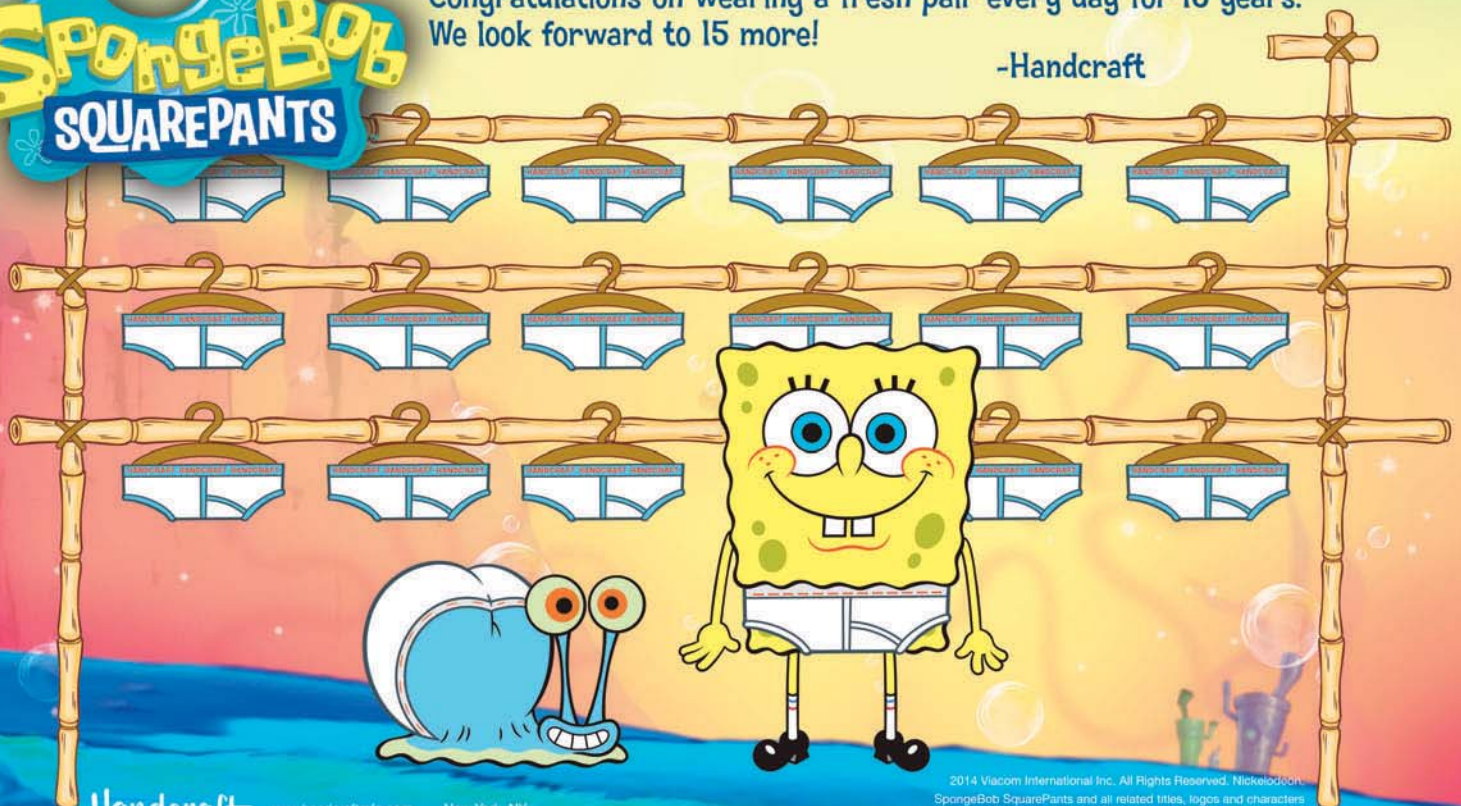
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SpongeBob SquarePants 15th Anniversary

luxury Toile de Jouy collection of products for select retailers and international territories including Europe, Asia and North America. The range will feature wallets, purses, make-up bags, mobile phone covers, notebooks, bed linens, crockery, shirts, caps, dresses and swimwear.

With more than \$13 billion in worldwide sales, the SpongeBob franchise remains a powerhouse brand and is expanding through new opportunities.

"We're working on a big program with Toys 'R' Us and have new lines debuting from Just Play, Imaginext and MEGA Bloks this year," says Kaufman. "We have 60 new licensees on board across toy, costume, and apparel, publishing and outdoor categories."

Confirmed partners include Just Play, MEGA Bloks, Fisher-Price Imaginext, Rubie's Costume Company, NKOK, Raskullz, Esquire Footwear and iStorytime, among others.

SpongeBob is one of the best examples of how a property from one medium can move to another, and become even bigger.

"The result is more content, more fans, more partnership, and more success," says Kaufman. ©



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SpongeBob SquarePants: International Superstar

Seen in more than 170 countries and territories worldwide and translated into more than 25 languages, SpongeBob SquarePants is the most widely distributed property in Viacom Media Networks' history.

"We launched the series internationally soon after it debuted in the U.S. and it has been a hit since day

one," says Ron Johnson, executive vice president, consumer products, Viacom International Media

Networks. "The show drives ratings in every market, and ranks as a top

10 program in Australia,

Brazil,

Canada,

Germany,

Spain,

India, Italy,

Mexico, Poland,

Russia, the U.K.

and South Africa."

Nickelodeon has focused on aggressive international growth for the property for 2015.

"We've expanded our relationships with theme parks in a number of countries and are in the process of finalizing Nickelodeon brand hotels in several international markets," says Johnson. "We're also doing more theatrical shows."

High-profile collaborations with

clothing lines Stay Real Asia and Eleven Paris, French accessories companies Nunettes and R-town, bespoke suitwear from British designer Richard James and t-shirts from Johnny Cupcakes in the U.S. have kept SpongeBob relevant to pop culture worldwide.

In 2015, Nick will concentrate on a different demographic.

"With a current focus on kids and adult lines, there is an opportunity to age-down and create a program to suit the youngest of our consumer demographics, ages 0 to 36 months, in established markets," says Johnson.

To start, Nickelodeon teamed with Monnalisa for a new infant and girl's fashion collection that will be distributed in more than 70 countries in Asia, the Middle East, Europe and the Americas. The new fashion collection was launched at a special event in June in Florence, Italy, during the Pitti Bimbo fashion week.

With the success of Nickelodeon retail stores in Mexico this year, Viacom plans to open more locations in Saudi Arabia and Moscow by next year with a section just for SpongeBob SquarePants apparel. Viacom will continue expanding in recreation and promotion with Nickelodeon-branded touring shows, exhibitions for cruises and resorts in Sydney, Australia, Madrid, Spain, Malaysia and Norway, with the SpongeBob character featuring throughout. The expansion will guarantee a "long-lasting connection to fans of all ages around the world," notes Johnson.

SpongeBob's apps and games have also gone global.

"The 'SpongeBob: You're Fired' game launched in March and has been incredibly strong internationally, and we're rolling out new apps in the Netherlands and the U.K.," says Johnson. "It's a business that keeps expanding."



Still **FLIPPING**
over SpongeBob after 15 years...
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SpongeBob SquarePants 15th Anniversary

SpongeBob SquarePants: Macy's Holiday Ambassador

This holiday season, SpongeBob SquarePants will be donning a Santa hat and serving as Macy's 2014 Holiday Ambassador.

"SpongeBob SquarePants has experienced many iconic moments over the last 15 years, and we are honored to add Macy's coveted holiday ambassadorship to the list," says Kaufman. "We're really excited about the program. The holidays are a magical time of year, and who better than SpongeBob, the eternal optimist, to deck the halls with cheer this season?"

To kick off the program in November, Macy's will carry an exclusive SpongeBob talking plush along with Patrick and Plankton finger puppets in more than 600 Macy's stores and on Macys.com. The SpongeBob SquarePants plush features

SpongeBob's signature laugh and memorable quotes and will grant access to exclusive online added-value components including a customizable and shareable digital holiday greeting.

The SpongeBob SquarePants balloon will make its 11th appearance in Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, while his likeness will be featured during the holiday shopping season on holiday posters and signage throughout Macy's stores nationwide. A number of SpongeBob in-store events are additionally planned for select locations. At Macy's flagship store in Herald Square, custom-designed shopping bags featuring SpongeBob will be distributed throughout the holiday season; a SpongeBob cold-air inflatable will also adorn a marquee entrance to the store and a window on the famed 34th Street side of the iconic department store will be dressed in Bikini Bottom holiday flair with the exclusive plush and other holiday décor.



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Eight Fun Facts About SpongeBob SquarePants

- SpongeBob SquarePants has been immortalized in wax at the world-renowned Madame Tussauds in New York City.
- There is a SpongeBob Square Tulip at the Keukenhof flower garden in Holland.
- Researchers at San Francisco State University discovered a new mushroom species in May 2011 and named it after SpongeBob.
- Fashion designer Karl Lagerfeld gave a SpongeBob SquarePants figurine a makeover that sold for more than \$1,500 at a World Wildlife Foundation fundraiser in 2009.
- In April, Nickelodeon threw a SpongeBob SquarePants-themed birthday party for superfan and singer/producer Pharrell Williams in New York City, with a personalized video message from SpongeBob himself.
- SpongeBob SquarePants was the first animated character to host an industry gifting suite at the Sundance Film Festival in 2009.
- In 2010, a 12-year-old girl from Long Island, New York, saved her friend from choking on bubble gum after she learned the Heimlich maneuver from an episode of "SpongeBob SquarePants."
- In 2012, an Australian man stranded at sea was rescued by the Coast Guard who spotted his yellow SpongeBob trunks from a distance.



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Five Keys to the Future of Gaming Brands

Gaming companies have firmly established themselves as a new hot bed for viable IP, but the long-term success of those brands will require differentiations and new initiatives.

By **Nicole Davis**

From King's "Candy Crush" to Ubisoft's "Assassin's Creed," gaming properties are proving they have just as much longevity and reach as any film or TV show. Now the question for these companies isn't whether they can create great brands, it's how to maintain their momentum.

Diversification will be the key, and there are five ways that leaders in the space are working to achieve just that:

■ **Digital to Physical:** For gaming companies licensing serves an essential purpose—it provides touch points that bridge the gap between the digital and physical worlds.

King has recently begun launching product for "Candy Crush," and video game creators like Sony Computer

Entertainment and Ubisoft continually put out full product programs for their new releases.

Hasbro, alongside Rovio, is taking the concept even further with its Telepods line, interactive figures akin to Activision's Skylanders that can be "brought to life" in Angry Birds games.

■ **New IP:** No company wants to be a one-trick pony, yet digital companies have consistently struggled to follow up their first hit game. As a result, almost all digital gaming companies these days are investing heavily in new IP.

King bought an Asian game developer in August to generate new genre titles; while Mind Candy will launch its second original brand, "World of Warriors," this fall and hosts an annual internal festival called Candy Stock to pitch new ideas.

■ **Linear Content:** No matter how established digital channels become, brands across the board still covet that primary screen space—TV and theatrical.

Video game studios, simply by virtue of being further along in their life cycle, don't have the same content concerns as new digital gaming houses. Instead, they are increasingly focused on bringing their brands to a wider audience.

Not only has Ubisoft already launched an animated series for its Rabbids game, which airs on Nickelodeon, but it is also planning big screen treatments for "Assassin's Creed" and "Watch Dogs." Sony Computer Entertainment is going the same route, with movies in development for "Uncharted 4: A Thief's End" and "The Last of Us."

And traditional gaming companies aren't alone in pursuing small- and big-screen space. An Angry Birds movie is slated to hit theaters in 2016; and OutFit7 is developing a TV series for its flagship brand, Talking Tom and Friends.

■ **Global Expansion:** One of the great benefits of digital games is their ability

to quickly and easily transcend borders, and a number of top gaming companies are taking advantage of that with plans to reach new audiences worldwide.

Just as "Candy Crush" revenues started to slip this summer, King launched the game in China and gained more than 1 billion potential new costumers; and Mind Candy is looking to grow its Moshi Monsters brand by introducing the online game in a swath of new territories in the coming years from Brazil to Japan.

■ **Constant Contact:** Gaming brands have a huge advantage in that they are already deeply integrated into their customers' lives, through smartphones and social media, and the continued monopolization of that access will drive growth.

Video game companies, which don't have such organic access to their consumers, are working to build new touch points for their brands, the most recent of which is the rise of live video game competitions that are so popular they fill stadiums as easily as any big music act. ©

Read On...

For more on how these companies plan to grow:

- Mind Candy expands beyond Moshi... **Page 118**
- King rolls out Candy Crush licensing... **Page 120**
- Sony Computer Entertainment adds to its roster... **Page 124**



EXPANDING THE MIND

Over the last 10 years, Mind Candy has transformed itself from a tech start-up to a full-fledged digital entertainment studio, and according to chief commercial officer Darran Garnham, this is only the beginning.

By **Nicole Davis**

Just five years ago, no one really knew what Mind Candy was. They knew “Moshi Monsters,” the company’s online kids’ game, but the company itself had less name recognition. Not so any more—Mind Candy has established itself as a powerhouse digital entertainment company and licensor.

Following a decade of explosive growth, the company is now focused on expanding its repertoire to include new IP, new territories and even a new entertainment platform for kids.

In the 10 years since the company was founded in 2004, it has grown from 13 employees to more than 200, and “Moshi Monsters” has become much more than just an online game—it is now a robust brand with multiple extensions. The property now boasts several console video games, a movie, a variety of app iterations and a best-selling album, not to mention a hugely successful licensing program that accounts for almost half of the company’s revenue.

That kind of transformation takes more than just

a good idea, it takes skillful execution and strategic guidance. Much of that has come from Darran Garnham, Mind Candy’s chief commercial officer, who joined the company in 2009.

“When I joined Mind Candy, there was a concern that I was commercializing something that was built on very strong foundations of safety, community and education. In some of those early Mind Candy days I wasn’t the most popular guy in the office,” Garnham says with a laugh. “The transition was interesting. Licensing has gone from being a distrusted commercial entity to being a trusted way to help build brands and drive consumers to our digital product.”

The company’s strategy has shifted as well from a tech company mentality to that of an entertainment studio with longer lead times and a multi-faceted approach to the launch of new products.

“Mind Candy is more of an entertainment company now than other digital IP houses,” says Garnham. “When you sign an agreement with Mind Candy,



Darran Garnham, chief commercial officer, Mind Candy

we'll show you a three-year plan, we'll show you style guides, we'll show you branding, we'll show you everything that you would expect from a movie or TV show. It's a professional outlet now, rather than the scrappy start-up that it was."

In the same vein, the company's founder, Michael Acton Smith, announced in July that he would be stepping down as chief executive officer to take on a more creative role within the organization again.

With Acton Smith freed up to do what he does best, the company is gearing up for a new period of creative energy, starting with the launch of its second game brand, "World of Warriors."

After nearly two years of development, the game will launch this fall for iOS and Android devices. The combat strategy app will feature iconic warriors from throughout history (think ninjas, Vikings and the like).

"We learned a lot from Moshi Monsters, and the thing that Mind Candy does well is depth and breadth of characters," says Garnham. "The great thing is, they're characters from throughout time, real warriors that have lived in our history from all over the world. There is something for every market. It really is going to be a global brand."

In a shift for the U.K. company, the game will launch first in the U.S., and Garnham says many of the brand's first licensees, which have not yet been announced, are American. Product including publishing, trading cards and toys will roll out in 2015, and a number of brand extensions are already in the works including a video game and an animation.

But Mind Candy isn't content to stop there. The company is also working on a new social community platform for kids under 13, PopJam.

"The goal is to give a younger audience the chance to learn to be social in a creative way," explains Garnham. "Moshi Monsters was built firstly to educate, but also to give kids their first avenue into the Internet in a safe way. PopJam will teach a younger consumer to be social in a creative, safe way, but it also allows them to interact with their favorite brands. There's not another product like it."

Geared toward kids ages 7 to 12, the app will allow users to create stories, art, photos, games, contests and more and share their content with other kids around the world. In addition to user-generated content, the app will also feature professional content from kid-centered brands such as Penguin and Carte Blanche's My Blue Nose Friends, which have

already joined. At the moment PopJam has been soft-launched in the U.K., with plans to formally launch the platform and roll it out in the U.S. later this year.

All of this doesn't mean that the company has moved on from Moshi Monsters—quite the opposite.

Having reached evergreen status in its home market of the U.K., Mind Candy is now looking to take the brand international. A new theme, Moshi Food Factory, will take over both the digital and physical Moshi worlds in Q1 next year, with food-themed activations both online and for toy and plush lines.

"I'm excited about the future for Moshi. Kids in Brazil, Germany, Russia and Japan have never heard of this, so we have a lot of markets and a lot of potential still to execute," says Garnham. "Internally we're looking at new digital activities we can do, and externally we're in discussions now with some pretty big entertainment companies to partner with from a content and distribution strategy."

The past 10 years have been filled with many successes, but also many lessons.

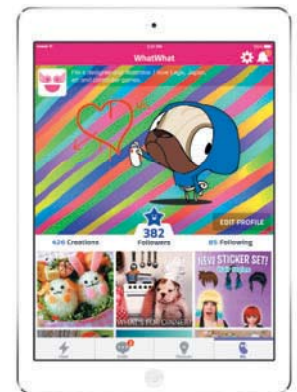
"We don't always do things right, but we learn from the things we do wrong," says Garnham in reference to the U.S. launch of Moshi Monsters which did not meet Mind Candy's expectations. Its success was dampened by poor distribution and the wrong price point.

Another learning moment? Moshi TV. But Garnham points to those lessons with positivity, remarking that they have helped the company learn what they are truly good at—creating innovative IP that appeals to modern kids.

"We had a lot of products that were audacious to take on," he says. "Our core expertise is incredible branded digital entertainment, and that's why we're having some great partnership discussions with people that don't have that discipline but do have animations and distribution. What we realized is what our strengths are and the need to focus. But we haven't lost sight of taking on big challenges. PopJam is a real meaty challenge that no one has attempted."

That kind of flexibility and fearlessness is exactly what has gotten Mind Candy so far in just 10 years and will serve it well in the next 10.

"Our mantra is that Mind Candy is the greatest entertainment company for this new digital generation. It's a mouthful, but it's true," says Garnham. "What I want us to be remembered for is challenging IP on new platforms and creating new ways to engage." ©



THE NEXT LEVEL



Following the runaway success of digital games such as “Candy Crush,” King is looking to take its brands, and its business, to the next level through licensing.

By **Nicole Davis**

King Digital Entertainment has proven once and for all that candy is addictive—not just the sugary confections found in stores, but in digital form as well. Now the gaming company is looking to give people more of what they want by expanding the app sensation “Candy Crush” beyond the smartphone, while also diversifying its portfolio and bringing other brands into the spotlight.

Founded in 2003, the London-based company became a household name around the world in 2012 with the launch of the match-three mobile game “Candy Crush Saga.” In March, King went public and now boasts 190 titles in more than 200 countries, reaching an average of 345 million users each month across its web and mobile platforms.

For its next stage of growth the company is looking to licensing. That charge is being lead by Claes Kalborg, a 20-year licensing veteran who joined the company in July 2013 from gaming company Rovio, taking on the aptly named role of licensing guru.

Just as he did at Rovio, Kalborg is now working to build a multi-faceted licensing program for King’s top digital properties, beginning with “Candy

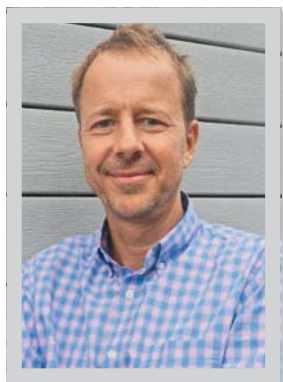
Crush,” which was the top-grossing iOS app of 2013 and remains at Top 10 grossing app in the Apple App Store, Google Play and on Facebook.

“This is a very exciting company,” says Kalborg. “King really invests in their games, and they are very innovative, coming up with new levels on a frequent basis. What we’d like to do with our licensing now is bridge the digital and physical worlds.”

In just over a year, Kalborg has already gathered close to 50 licensees and established a network of regional agents for Candy Crush around the world.

Those agents include Striker Entertainment in the U.S. and Canada; Tycoon Enterprises in Latin America (except Argentina and Brazil); Tycoon 360 in Brazil; IMC in Argentina; Mediogen in Israel; Sinerji in Turkey; Pacific Licensing Studio in Southeast Asia; Wild Pumpkin Licensing in Australia and New Zealand; PPW in greater China; and Voozclub in Korea. The European licensing business for the brand will continue to be handled in-house.

“King is first and foremost a gaming company, so licensing for us is really a brand-building exercise to broaden the brand, get exposure at retail and



Claes Kalborg, licensing guru, King Digital Entertainment

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to fulfill the demands of our costumers,” explains Kalborg. “We are quite selective in the categories and companies we choose to work with because each product must make sense for the brand.”

While “Candy Crush” is unique in having cross-generational appeal, the brand’s merchandising program is targeted specifically to adults.

The first-ever deal for the property was a sock partnership with Happy Socks, launched in June 2013. A confectionery line at Dylan’s Candy Bar in the U.S. followed last November, and a similar deal was recently struck with Spun Candy in the U.K., which launched a Candy Crush candy line at Selfridges in August. Several apparel deals are also in the works with Skybrands in Europe and Signorelli, which created a line for U.S. retailer Wet Seal.

And that’s only the beginning for a brand licensing program that is still in its infancy. Among the swath of upcoming products will be a worldwide fragrance release from Air-Val featuring candy-shaped bottles and corresponding scents.

With the Candy Crush program off the ground, Kalborg is now looking to add to the company’s licensing roster.

Diversification will be vitally important for the long-term success, not only of King’s licensing efforts,

but for the company as a whole. Since going public earlier this year, the company has seen wild fluctuations in its stock price as analysts debate whether the gaming company is over-reliant on “Candy Crush.”

The company has already made several moves to combat these fears, starting with the acquisition of the Singapore game developer Nonstop Games Aug. 6, which will be dedicated to developing new genre titles, the first of which

will launch next year.

Additionally, the company ensured the continued momentum of “Candy Crush” when it partnered with Chinese social media platform Tencent in August to release a localized version of the game, vastly expanding the brand’s geographic reach.

The company is so serious about its brand that it famously trademarked the word “candy” at the beginning of this year.

“Our policy is to protect our IP and also respect the IP of others,” explains Kalborg. “We have the trademark for ‘candy’ in Europe, but we’re not trying to control the world’s use of the word. Not only do we not want to, but having a trademark doesn’t allow us to do that anyway. There’s nothing very unusual about trademarking a common word for specific uses—think of ‘Time,’ ‘Fortune’ and ‘Apple’ to name a few. We’re just trying to prevent others from creating games that unfairly capitalize on our success.”

And Kalborg expects that success to continue, despite Wall Street pundits’ concerns. He points to continued enthusiasm from both fans and licensees for “Candy Crush,” as well as the strength of some of the company’s other global properties including “Farm Heroes Saga,” “Bubble Witch Saga” and “Pet Rescue Saga.”

In fact, Kalborg plans to launch Farm Heroes for licensing at Brand Licensing Europe this month. The game, which debuted on Facebook in 2013 and on mobile at the beginning of this year, lets players embark on a farming adventure where they must match three Cropsies (fruit and vegetable characters) to drive away Rancid the Racoon.

As with Candy Crush, product will be targeted to an adult demographic.

“I think the brand will lend itself well to food items, things like dairy, and we’ll likely create more FMCG product for this brand than we have with Candy Crush, as well as apparel and accessories,” says Kalborg.

As King moves forward with its licensing strategy, Kalborg expects to see continued innovation, not only from his company, but from the genre as a whole, driven by the deep relationship digital brands have with their costumers.

“Our ability to actually work with licensees and use our digital channels to promote and present products really makes us unique from traditional companies,” Kalborg says. ©

King’s Top Properties



Candy Crush Saga

(now available for licensing)

Launched in 2012 on Facebook and mobile



Farm Heroes Saga

(launching for licensing in October)

Launched in 2013 on Facebook and on mobile earlier this year



Bubble Witch Saga

Launched in 2011 on Facebook and in 2012 on mobile with a sequel released in June



Pet Rescue Saga

Launched in 2012 on Facebook and in 2013 on mobile

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ready TO PLAY

Sony Computer Entertainment Europe's licensing program made its BLE debut in 2012. Since, it has shown triple-digit growth in licensing revenue. Now the company aims to cement the perception of the company as a major licensing player.

By **Bob Jenkins**

At the forefront of Sony Computer Entertainment's Brand Licensing Europe 2014 lineup is its gaming property LittleBigPlanet 3. SCEE's David Evans, European licensing manager, describes this as "one of the most recognizable new IP that we will be launching at BLE 2014." And, although lauding the game's lead character SackBoy as, "an incredibly well-known character and a strong hook for licensing," Evans also notes the property's three newest characters to debut in the latest edition—OddSock, Swoop and Toggle—as enticing opportunities for licensees as well.

OddSock is a four-legged creature with the ability to climb walls and jump over obstacles; Swoop is a little bird who, of course, can fly, but who also

has the ability to pick up things; while Toggle is a character that exists in two different forms—there's a Big Toggle and Little Toggle and players have to alternate between the different versions as the needs of the game demand.

For Evans, the new character differentiation and functionality is a key point.

"Having new characters is a great help for licensing of course, but game design is all about the game—that's why they're there," he says.

Nonetheless, the new LittleBigPlanet 3 property with its new characters has already generated a good deal of interest in the licensing world.

"We have worked closely with Bioworld to create lines of apparel, gifts and accessories, and GBEye is working with us on posters, badges and giftware,"

says Evans. “Additionally, we have launched an apparel range with Insert Coin—they worked very cleverly to create apparel inspired by the games that gives a nod to them, but is very subtle...what you might call ‘pub safe!’”

Despite all this activity around LittleBigPlanet 3, Evans insists the brand has plenty of room to grow even more.

“We are definitely interested in talking to companies about other opportunities in the rest of Europe, especially in the areas of gifts and apparel, for which I think LittleBigPlanet 3 is especially well suited. We are also interested in exploring any publishing opportunities that might be out there for the brand.”

Also in SCEE’s BLE lineup is the *The Last of Us* property. “This game, which is from our first-party development studio Naughty Dog, did fantastically well when it was released on PS3 in 2012, winning more than 200 game of the year awards,” says Evans.



Having been re-mastered and recently released for PS4, Sony’s newest gaming platform that has sold more than 10 million units since its launch, “*The Last of Us*” is a video game set in a post-apocalyptic world, and is, says Evans, “very cinematic.” So it is no surprise then that a movie is currently in development which, as Evans points out, opens the property up for other product ranges traditionally associated with film such as action figures and high-end art.

SCEE has more gaming properties in its portfolio as well. In association with Naughty Dog is “*Uncharted 4: A Thief’s End*.” Like “*The Last of Us*,” “*Uncharted 4*” is a third-person action-adventure game, and it also has a film in development, with a tentative release slated for 2016.

“*The Order: 1886*” is another third-party game, this time set against the backdrop of what Evans describes as, “an alternative history of Victorian London.” Players are up against Galahad, one of an elite group of knights known as The Order, which battles, among others, against groups of half-breeds.

Of course video games, like all technology-based businesses, are all about what’s new and what the future holds. But SCEE has a distinct advantage—they have a long history full of classic properties. And, SCEE will, reveals Evans, be, delving into the archive for original PS games such as “*Lemmings*” and “*WipEout*,” creating great opportunities in gifting and apparel and, in the case of the *WipEout* property, high-end art also.

According to Evans, these are only some of the opportunities that SCEE will be offering at BLE 2014. With properties that run the gamut from must-have/cutting edge to heritage, it is easy to see why Evans’ self imposed BLE priority is cementing the company as a major licensing player. ©



AGP'S GLOBAL TAKEOVER



American Greetings Properties is setting up its Strawberry Shortcake and Care Bears brands for international recognition in 2015.

By Patricia DeLuca

When Sean Gorman joined American Greetings Properties in 2007, his goal was to boost the overall operations of AGP's children's properties such as Strawberry Shortcake and Care Bears throughout media and retail, including all marketing and licensing activities around the brands and their related content.

"We're lucky that we have two brands with awareness going to the market. We're a creatively-driven company. It's about connecting the consumer with really great product," says Gorman, president, American Greetings Properties.

So far the combination seems to be working for AGP. A number of licensees in the U.S., Canada, Europe and Africa have signed with AGP to help further the reach of the iconic children's characters.

What does AGP look for in a licensing partner?

"It's the right alignment of licensees that are like-minded, making sure that the product gets it right, whether it's Strawberry Shortcake dolls in the right look and feel or Care Bears plush that is the right size and value. We make sure it pops and

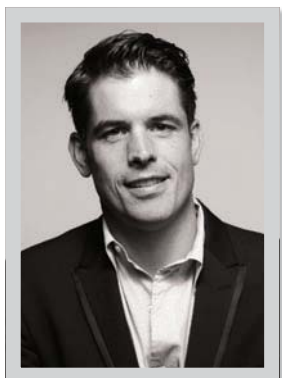
it has an emotional connection," says Gorman.

AGP has numerous launches planned for Strawberry Shortcake this year.

"Strawberry Shortcake resonates with girls for its contemporary music and fashion. There are a lot of girls who respond to that," says Gorman. "The brand has a unique position, in my mind. It's the biggest post-preschool brand among girls ages 6-11 and ages 3-5, and it's that in-between space that has been getting a lot of torque around the world."

In North America alone, Strawberry Shortcake will have multiple new apparel lines including girls' daywear from Handcraft; girls' and junior's sleepwear from Li & Fung; headwear, cold weather accessories and belts from Accessory Innovations; fine and costume jewelry from World Trade Jewelers; bags and backpacks from Fast Forward; and Trevco for classic Strawberry Shortcake tees for teens and adults.

In Canada, Buzzerk and NTD Apparel are extending their relationships for daywear, sleepwear and apparel; and new swim safety partner, Coleman,



**Sean Gorman, president,
American Greetings
Properties**



will introduce a line of girls' life jackets.

Strawberry Shortcake is also internationally known. This year, more product with her likeness will appear in France for housewares, 3D aluminum sports bottles and lunch boxes from CIJEP; candy containers, mobile phones and jelly machines from Starfair in South Africa; Maul in Benelux for apparel and swimwear; and In.Ten.Sud. for apparel in Italy.

Strawberry Shortcake will also have a big presence in Turkey with Cimpa for apparel, Dogan Egmont for publishing and Zorluteks for bedding.

"The Turkish business for Strawberry Shortcake has been phenomenal—above expectations," says Gorman. "So we're going to look to push that."

The character will also get a launch "in a meaningful way in toy and TV (in Russia)," says Gorman, and AGP will continue to promote Strawberry Shortcake in Brazil where Gorman says it had "tons of success."

"Strawberry Shortcake is top girls' brand in Brazil, and the properties that comes out of there are beautiful," he says.

Merchantwise, Global Licensing and Scholastic will publish a series of Strawberry Shortcake products throughout 2014 including readers, storybooks, color and activity books, sticker books, board books, novelty books and other formats. The product line will be distributed through the Scholastic book club, online and retail stores in Australia and New Zealand.

In September 2013, a new Strawberry Shortcake apparel line by Mitch Dowd was released exclusively in Kmart's 170 stores throughout Australia and 15 stores in New Zealand. Additionally, Courier Luggage also launched Strawberry Shortcake-branded bags, backpacks and luggage for the holiday season.

Strawberry Shortcake's animated TV show, "Strawberry Shortcake's Berry Bitty Adventures" which airs in the U.S., Canada and France, is now in production for a fourth season, "and most shows don't go on past a couple of seasons," Gorman points out.

AGP's Care Bears property is also going strong thanks to its aggressive campaign and the planned return of Care Bears Cousins in 2015. Just Play has

locked down an exclusive distribution deal with Vivid Toy Group to bring plush Care Bears to the U.K., France, Germany and Benelux next spring.

Care Bears will continue to conquer the world via licensing with new deals in the U.K. such as footwear from Brand International; school bags, messenger bags and backpacks from Posh Paws; a branded Care Bears magazine from Redan; and costumes and accessories from RH Smith and Sons. Turkey will get Care Bears coloring books, activity books and storybooks from Lal Kitap; Santex will make Care Bears apparel for Germany, Austria and Switzerland; and Just Formats will provide Care Bears puzzles and card games in Benelux.

There's also a co-venture between Care Bears and Sanrio for the Kiki and LaLa characters. More world wide co-branding expansions with Sanrio are in the works, according to Gorman.

"Care Bears has the nostalgic, four-quadrant appeal to kids," says Gorman. "It's cute for babies, and moms remember it. Even dads and boys of a certain age have an affinity toward Care Bears. It's an incredible, positive brand."

One celebrity dad with such affinity for the brand is actor Channing Tatum, who showed a photo of his Care Bears themed birthday on the TV show "Late Night with Jimmy Fallon." Celebrity fan engagement "put a wind in our sails," admits Gorman.

AGP will continue to bring both brands into the digital world with Strawberry Shortcake apps already popular among fans. Digital game company Miniclip partnered with AGP to co-create "Berry Rush," a mobile game released this summer.

"Not a lot of brands have that level of success from a girls' side," says Gorman. "It's very competitive against any other [girl-focused brands] out there."

Gorman notes that both brands are aligned 360-degrees digitally.

"We play each product for different audiences," says Gorman. "Both brands have new toy partners, new content and have a burgeoning app business here and abroad. That's the focus—to get those back up to maximum performance and spread out throughout the known universe." ©

eOne is So So Happy

Canada's Entertainment One bought Art Impressions in 2013, and since, the company has been focused on the re-launch of the key brand So So Happy.

By **Bob Jenkins**

In 2013, Entertainment One purchased U.S.-based brand licensing agency Art Impressions as part of its global expansion efforts, and with it, eOne acquired the rights to Art Impressions' So So Happy brand. Andrew Carley, eOne's head of global licensing, is clearly thrilled with the progress the company has made with the brand since the acquisition of Art Impressions a year ago.

"It has been a very busy and exciting year. Art Impressions and So So Happy were a perfect fit for eOne, because for some time, we had been keen to move into licensing non-television properties," says Carley. "But when we acquired the property, it meant a lot of different things to a lot of different people, and so first we had to develop a much more targeted look and then develop a marketing plan that worked

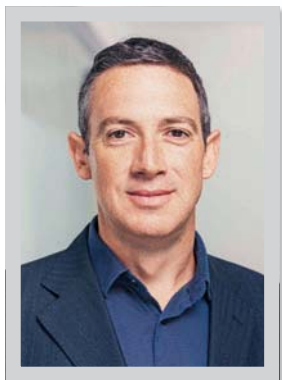
for that new look. From that plan, we organized our roll out strategy."

Although So So Happy creator Cindy Bailey (and Art Impressions founder) brought the brand into existence as a response to the bullying suffered by her son at school, the new look and focus has subtly changed.

"While the anti-bullying message is still there as a backdrop, the message is much more about well-being and positivity, and the property is now much more tightly focused at young female teens," explains Carley.

Emphasizing this change, Bailey points to the So So Happy tag line, "Be lucky, spread love and believe in yourself," to stress the brand's deep meaning.

"The brand is about self-confidence and belief in one's self," says Bailey. "I believe that our goals of hope, belief in yourself and kindness are



**Andrew Carley, head of
global licensing, eOne**

messages that are timeless and that will transcend geographical and cultural barriers resonating with teenagers everywhere.”

Prior to its acquisition by eOne, the brand had, aside from one publishing deal, existed only as a consumer products brand. eOne has strategized and put plans into place to greatly expand the So So Happy brand footprint.

“We have extensively re-worked the website and have developed 13 three minute shorts which we envisage using on the Internet and social media,” says Carley. “One of the main features we have built into these shorts is flexibility in their use—for example, there are five-second segments that are perfect for use on mobile.”

Despite this development, Carley is adamant that there are no plans for a television series currently, but he remarks that the option is not off the table for the future.

“I would never say never to a television presence,” says Carley.

With its roots in merchandise, significant plans are already underway for the So So Happy consumer product campaign.

“The main licensing program started about five years ago in the U.S., but lacked focus,” recalls Carley, a point he illustrates through emphasizing the diverse retail channels in which early So So



Cindy Bailey, founder, Art Impressions, and creator, So So Happy

Happy was distributed. It was simultaneously carried by both retailer Toys ‘R’ Us and Hot Topic. “So, we had to pull it back and start again, this time focusing on young female teens.”

In pursuit of this strategy, eOne has now signed three core licensees for the U.S. market—Goodie Two Sleeves, Iron Fist and Lounge Fly. According to Carley, the product ranges will be aspirational mid-market fashion ranges. eOne has also not ruled out a pop-up shop campaign.

In the U.S., plans are underway for a flagship store in Los Angeles, Calif., says Bailey, set to open by the end of next year. The flagship retail location will cap off the full launch of a stateside campaign that Carley envisages will happen in early 2015.

Once the roll out has started and gained traction in the U.S., the next markets on the agenda will be the U.K. and Australia, which Carley anticipates launching late next year.

“We want to make sure that we have got the campaign right in the U.S., however, before we jump into the U.K. and Australia,” says Carley.

Once launches are underway in these three markets, Carley says that other territories will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

eOne will also look to the U.S. program and its successes before determining a roster of licensees for the wider global launch of the So So Happy licensing program.

“Whether we use the same licensees in the U.K. and Australia as we have signed in the U.S. is something on which we will keep a determinedly open mind,” says Carley. “We will take a close look at how things work in the U.S., and we will also have a close look at the precise nature of local campaigns and what local licensees can offer and we will make our minds up then.” ©



The TRU Transformation Continues

With a new executive team and a new strategy, Toys ‘R’ Us is focused on various improvements and the critical holiday season.

By **Tony Lisanti**

While the iconic toy and baby products retailer continues to fine tune its merchandising, service and omni-channel operations, Toys ‘R’ Us remains one of the most important retailers to top licensors worldwide.

Despite its inherent challenges and the numerous initiatives to improve its business that were announced as part of its transformation strategy last March (and updated again during its Holiday Preview presentation last month), TRU continues to be a leader in licensed merchandise. With 877 Toys ‘R’ Us and Babies ‘R’ Us stores in the U.S. and Puerto Rico, more than 710 international stores, more than 195 licensed stores in 35 countries and total sales of almost \$14 billion, the specialty retailer ranked No. 73, according to the Global Powers of Retailing published by the National Retail Federation and Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited.

During his recent holiday presentation, TRU president Hank Mullany singled out licensed products, saying, “It’s beginning to look a lot like a licensing Christmas.”

He highlighted Nickelodeon’s Teenage Mutant

Ninja Turtles and Paw Patrol; Hasbro’s Transformers, and Disney’s Doc McStuffins, Star Wars Rebels and Frozen as well as “Disney Infinity: Marvel Super Heroes (2.0 edition),” “Skylanders Trap Team” and Activision Blizzard’s “Destiny” as top gaming properties. In fact, even TRU’s brand marketing campaign “C’mon Let’s Play” features ads based on TMNT and Frozen.

Mullany also outlined steps the company has taken

during the first half of the year to prepare its stores for the busy shopping season, including building its leadership team, successfully concluding its inventory clearance, significantly improving its in-stock position, strengthening customer relationships with enhanced service offerings and re-deploying capital for store maintenance.

“We are pleased with our progress and the foundational improvements we’ve made to the business in preparing for the busy months ahead,” says Mullany. “Our focus at Toys ‘R’ Us for the 2014 Holiday season is to make it easy for customers to shop with us both in-store and online. At the same time, we will clearly demonstrate our toy category leadership through our broad product assortment, by having hot toys in-stock when customers want them and leveraging the expertise of our employees in helping gift-givers select the right toy for the child on their list.”

This strategic analysis not only sounds very much the same as in previous years, but it also is similar to the dialogue from other retailers around the globe.

While retailers need to address all these operational and omni-channel challenges in order to remain competitive and profitable, they cannot overlook what still is the most important and fundamental aspect of retailing: merchandising and the specific products they sell.

When you walk the aisles of TRU and other retailers and review the circulars and ads, it’s clear that licensed merchandise remains one most of the important strategies that not only drives traffic to the stores, but also keeps retailers relevant and on-trend to its core audiences.

Toys ‘R’ Us believes its transformation strategy is designed to position the business for sustainable, long-term growth. You can bet that every licensing executive around the globe will be cheering for the retailer to succeed and selling them another line of licensed products. ©



Hank Mullany, president, Toys ‘R’ Us.

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